

Contesting Masculinity:  
Locating the Male Body in Roman Elegy

by

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for my grandparents

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## ABSTRACT

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As the question stands now in the study of Roman elegy, there exists no comprehensive examination of the poetic construction of the male body set against traditional Roman discourse on masculinity. This dissertation explores the complexity of gender within Roman elegy by assessing the fluidity of the male poet-lover's gender identity as it is manipulated within the fluctuating poetic constructions of his body. While the *persona* of the author—the poet-lover—frequently asserts his subservience to the dominant *puella* (girlfriend), elegy's poet-lover does not exhibit a static, unchangingly effeminate identity. At times the poet-lover is, indeed, effeminate, but at others he lays claim to an identity more masculine than that of the paradigmatic figure of the Roman soldier, whose identity is similarly entangled and destabilized by the elegiac discourse on the male body. The system of gender identity articulated in the amatory narrative thus presents a dynamic that is more complex than the simple inversion of traditional notions of masculinity can represent. I argue that the corporeal discourse on the male body shifts to represent the rhetorical needs of

the lover in a given poem, needs which are mediated by his interaction with the *puella*, but also by his peers and rivals.

The more nuanced gender paradigm proposed here is formulated first by uncovering innovations in elegy's treatment of the often conventionalized categories of the body (beauty, infirmity, and wounds) and second by analyzing the relative visual access granted to the range of elegiac male bodies. Through the adaptation of literary conventions and traditional signs, the poet-lover demonstrates the instability of traditional semiotics within normative Roman discourses. By extending the question of the lover's elegiac and masculine identity to an examination of elegiac discourse on the male body and the interplay of this discourse with traditional Roman masculinity, this study elucidates the overall gender paradigm within which elegy operates. I conclude that elegiac corporeal discourse does not reflect a literary gender system isolated from that of the non-literary sphere, and that consequently the complexity and fluidity of elegiac identity in turn uncovers similar instability in normative Roman values and semiotics.

## Chapter I:

### Introduction

As the question stands now in the study of Roman elegy, there exists no comprehensive examination of the poetic construction of the male body set against traditional Roman masculinity. Current scholarship on elegiac gender is dominated by discussion of the inverted gender roles and confused power dynamics of the male poet-lover and his *puella*. Scholars employing feminist perspectives have been more prone to investigating the question of female submission or domination. Those studies that do approach the lover's gender identity often begin with the assumption of his effeminacy, but then uncover ways in which he transcends or feigns this supposed weakness. At times, the poet-lover reclaims his masculinity by appropriating epic values within either the trope of *militia amoris* or his mythological models. At others, the lover accomplishes this simply by dominating the *puella*, either through his control over poetic discourse or in the poetic exposure of the *puella's* body. In each of these scholarly approaches, the lover's power to manipulate the terms of his world, as both poet and lover, is employed to undercut his proclaimed weakness.

I argue that the lover's body is as much of a construct as either his poetics or the *puella's* body, yet this aspect of identity has been neglected. The male body is not absent from elegy, and, although most of these manifestations might appear to be mere replication of poetic conventions on love, these conventional



bodies are essential to understanding male identity as configured within elegy. The goal of this study is to extend the question of the lover's elegiac and masculine identity to an examination of elegiac discourse on the male body and the interplay of this discourse with traditional Roman masculinity. The complexity and fluidity of elegiac identity respond to a similar negotiability in normative Roman values and semiotics.

### A Survey of the Treatment of Gender in Elegy

Elegiac scholarship of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries approached the central amatory relationship of the lover and *puella* with an interest in either promoting or vigorously refuting readings of elegy as sincere autobiography.<sup>1</sup> Turning away from this positivistic approach, Judith Hallett initiated the discussion on gender in her attempt to uncover more about the conditions of real women living in ancient Rome.<sup>2</sup> For Hallett, elegy's gender inversion represented not the true empowerment of women in Roman society, but a poetic statement of "discontent" with the treatment of women as either "demure, submissive chattels" or as figures easily exploited.<sup>3</sup> According to this

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<sup>1</sup> This was already a practice in antiquity, with Apuleius, *Apologia* 10, listing women who could be represented by the elegiac *puellae*.

See Wyke (2002) 11-31 who disagrees with the biographical approach, but provides a thorough discussion of how, even now, elegiac realism lures scholars back to the question of the woman behind the verse. Also see Keith (2008) 87-92, who discusses the problem and cites Lachmann (1816) and Haight (1932) as early examples. Cf. also Allen (1950); Williams (1968) 524-561; and Veyne (1983).

For discussion of the sources behind the biographical information of Propertius himself, see Keith (2008) 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> Hallett (1973). This article sparked an academic debate between Hallett and Betensky, which may be followed in Betensky (1973) and (1974) and Hallett (1974). Betensky's criticism stems mainly from concerns of sincerity versus the poetic *persona*, and she argues that the relationship does not reflect a "feminist ideal" (268).

<sup>3</sup> Hallett (1973) 108. Sauvage (1983) revisits these questions, when he argues that Propertius desires the ideal of a woman liberated from the power of man and prefers gender equality (840-843). See also Hallett (1993) 63 for her argument of Propertius as a feminist; she states that

view, the gender inversion is not so much a genuine assertion of the weakness of the poet-lover as a tool for promoting the interests of women:

“[The elegists] were also motivated by a powerful, often mischievously subversive desire to differentiate themselves and their own system of values from existing forms of conduct. Consequently the amatory elegists do not restrict themselves to venerating their beloved. They even cast her in the active, masterful role customarily played by men.”<sup>4</sup>

The portrayal of the lover as faithful to a single *puella* and as a *servus amoris* (slave of love) reflects roles traditionally assumed by Roman women that, when applied to men, elevate the status of the *puella* in the poetic sphere. With this approach, the lover’s status is secondary to the question of the *puella*’s.

Moving away from the argument of the man as a foil for the woman, Maria Wyke treats both the *puella*’s body and her relationship with the poet-lover in metapoetic terms. Instead of a real woman, the *puella* serves as a metaphor for the lover’s poetry, and, as such, her written body embodies the stylistic qualities of his poetry.<sup>5</sup> Through the relationship of poet and *scripta puella*, the poet-lover describes her body and personality to reflect his poetic and political values. In this way, Wyke argues that the *puella* acts as a construct in the service of defining the elegiac lover:

“The female is employed in the text only as a means to defining the male. Her social status is not clearly defined because the dominating perspective

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“definitions of feminism are historically relative,” so he is not directly transferable to more modern notions of feminism.

<sup>4</sup> Hallett (1973) 103.

<sup>5</sup> See Wyke (2002) for the most extensive discussion of such analysis; (1987a); (1987b); (1989a) for a discussion of the *puella* as a construction reflecting the concerns of Gallus (as reflected in Virgil’s *Eclogues*), Tibullus, and Horace; (1989b) for discussion of *Amores* 3.1 and the allegory of Elegy and Tragedy. See also Bright (1978) 99-123 on Delia and Nemesis as literary creations; Sharrock (1991) describes how the elegist represents the *puella* as an art object created by the poet; McNamee (1993) for discussion on the elegiac love affair as an allegory for the difficulties of the poetic process in the Augustan age; Keith (1994) demonstrates the connection between poetics and *puella* in those *Amores* poems not explicitly dealing with poetic program; DeBrohun (1994) and (2003) 156-200 for a discussion of Propertius Book 4 and how change of clothing reflects change in poetic ideals.

is that of the male narrator. What matters is his social and political position as an elite male citizen who, in having a mistress (however indifferent she may be), refuses to be a *maritus* or the father of *milites*.”<sup>6</sup>

The importance of the *puella* stems from what she reveals about the lover, not what she can elucidate about women. As an extension of this approach, Barbara Gold and Alison Sharrock have taken up the poet-lover’s power over poetic discourse to undercut his claims of weakness.<sup>7</sup> In this type of reading, the *puella* is considered to be “endlessly adaptable by the poet because she is a projection of his desires and anxieties.”<sup>8</sup> He is able to “manipulate her time, her space, and her attributes.”<sup>9</sup> The *puella*’s inability to control the circumstances of her narrative illustrates her position of dependency and confirms the poet-lover’s power. In this system of analysis, the traditional dynamics of passivity and dominance are restored, despite the lover’s claims of weakness.

The female body most visibly emerges as a location for the negotiation of male and female power within studies addressing concerns of the gaze.<sup>10</sup> Broadly speaking, the individual holding the gaze (the male) is assumed to hold subjective power over the object (the female). Ellen Greene frames Ovid’s description of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5 in terms of Laura Mulvey’s theory of “fetishistic scopophilia.” By looking at the *puella* through this lens, Greene argues, the lover “dehumanizes his mistress” and presents her merely as a

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<sup>6</sup> Wyke (2002) 30.

<sup>7</sup> See Gold (1993a) and (1993b) on the *puella*’s adaptability, as well as discussion on the question of the *puella* as patron, a status which is overturned when the lover gets angry and refuses to write of her; Sharrock (1991) also emphasizes the amount of control of the poet-lover. For another study of the contradiction between the lover’s feigned weakness and his power over the *puella*, see Greene (1998) who argues that the lover’s passivity is adopted as a ruse to win over the *puella*, after which he asserts his dominance, often through the violence of epic models.

<sup>8</sup> Gold (1993a) 88.

<sup>9</sup> Gold (1993a) 88.

<sup>10</sup> For studies that do not use the term, “the gaze,” but still consider questions of the *puella*’s passivity in visual terms, see Curran (1966), Lyne (1970), and Breed (2003). See also the essays in Fredrick (2002) on various approaches to the Roman gaze outside of elegy.

fragmented body.<sup>11</sup> The *puella* becomes an “icon, passive and inert, while the male narrator emerges as the representative of power.” He has the power to manipulate the terms of his description of the *puella*, thus rendering her powerless. David Fredrick complicates Mulvey’s theory by examining the masculinity of the elegiac lover as a fluctuation between a feminine and masculine position. Fredrick connects the elegiac “fascination” of the lover with “fetishistic scopophilia,” where “time stops and space is collapsed into a gratifying visual presence,” and his epic-like “jealousy” with “sadistic voyeurism,” which entails a desire to punish the *puella*.<sup>12</sup> Depending on the lover’s specific perspective, the lover takes on qualities of both effeminacy and masculinity. More recent studies on the gaze have noted the potential for shifting power from the spectator to the object viewed.<sup>13</sup> In her study demonstrating how the lover’s gaze is modeled upon recognizable scenes of mythology, Hérica Valladares demonstrates how the subjective position of the lover in Propertius 1.3 becomes destabilized by his “enchantment” with the *puella*. The lover’s “enervating fascination” with the *puella* “shifts power away from the subject to the object.”<sup>14</sup> The male loses power when he is unable to look away from the female. In the studies of both Fredrick and Valladares, the power

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<sup>11</sup> Greene (1998) 82-84.

<sup>12</sup> Fredrick (1997) 173-174.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to Valladares (2005), also see O’Neill (2005) for a similar instability of the gaze caused by the interception of the female object’s “glance.” In this dynamic, the object of the gaze is able to hold some power over the spectator, as “she alone controls access to what the lover wants and, therefore...she is in the position to claim the dominant role in their relationship.”

<sup>14</sup> Valladares (2005) 226. The particular instant that signals the object’s potential power in this instance is the mention of Argus, who instead of being merely “enchanted” with Io is “frozen in place.” The other allusions to mythological scenes—those including Andromeda, the maenad, and Ariadne—all reflect more traditional dynamics of a powerful male upon an objectified female.

of the gaze is ambiguous, which, therefore, results in an unstable gender dynamic between the lover and *puella*.

The disruption of masculine identity due to interaction with the female forms the basis of Micaela Janan's discussion of Propertius. Using Lacanian and other poststructuralist theory, she demonstrates the fundamental dependence of male identity upon the figure of the female. Janan states that "the signifiers 'man,' 'Roman,' 'good lover' attain meaning not positively by their content but negatively by their difference from other elements."<sup>15</sup> These positive terms (or signifiers) mean nothing without their recognized opposites; they can suggest only a nebulous identity lacking meaningful boundaries. For Janan, the elegiac lover's identity remains undefined without an identified binary against which he may set up his own identity, but the female, as Other, both informs and disturbs Roman male identity in this time period of political change from Republic to Principate.

### The Neglect of the Male Body in Elegiac Male Identity

Most aspects of elegiac identity are best understood as a negotiation of terms rather than a firmly defined state, and so the focus on uncovering the *puella*'s physical and narrative identity has made significant contributions for discussing the lover's as well. In addition, elegy's pointed depiction of an empowered *puella* and a submissive poet-lover so transgresses the gender conventions traditionally ascribed to the ancient Romans that it has often been difficult to look beyond the implications of this peculiar relationship. As a result, the *puella* has heavily dominated most treatments of identity within and beyond

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<sup>15</sup> Janan (2001) 12.

the confines of the genre's amatory narrative. Furthermore, the female and her body have held a certain mystique for modern scholars, as they mine the poetry of elite male poets for any information regarding the lives of women who held little influence within predominantly male literary circles. We want to understand the Roman woman and the circumstances of her existence. If read as either a criticism of traditional gender norms or an expression of Roman males' socio-political impotence resulting from the rise of Augustus, this dynamic reflects the disruption of traditional Roman masculinity. If read with an interest in confirming the lover's masculinity by pointing to the contradiction embodied in a weakened poet-lover who has clear authorial command over the narrative and his *puella*, this relationship promotes traditional notions of male authority. With either approach, the *puella* and the nature of her relationship to the poet-lover have served as a key for decoding how elegiac masculinity functions and how the poet-lover fits into that system of meaning.

Yet, this focus on the *puella*—lover relationship has resulted in the relative neglect of other potential dynamics.<sup>16</sup> The lover and his particular brand of masculinity remain broadly defined when outlined through this particular set of terms. In those instances where the lover is indeed more passive than the *puella*, the reader only gets a sense that he does not act in accordance with traditional norms in relations with the *puella*; in those circumstances where he dominates her physically or poetically, he acts within normal ranges of masculine behavior.

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<sup>16</sup> For the most extensive discussions on male interaction in elegy, see especially Oliensis (1997), Sharrock (2000) who states that the viewing of the *puella*, even when in the context of a rivalry, can reinforce male friendship (270) and that "...the character of the lover is partly constructed out of his close relationships with friends and rivals" (281), and Keith (2008) 115-138. Also see Greene (2005a) who mentions homosocial interaction with an *amicus* in Propertius 2.8 and 2.9 amidst her discussion on the recasting of roles for *puella* and lover, and Nelis (2010) on the revelation of social relationships outside of that of the *puella*—lover through the variation in addressees and speech acts in Propertius 1.1-1.4.

Either the lover is masculine or effeminate, or he moves between, but not necessarily within, both extremes. There is a need for more gradation in this system. Furthermore, by only examining identity through the female body or by only exploring how the male becomes feminine or represses the *puella*, scholarship appears to buy into the “second sex” discourse, in which the female body and being feminine are something strange and exotic, while the male body is accepted as the norm.<sup>17</sup> If gender analyses overlook the male body because it is presented in the terms of poetic convention and not provocatively displayed in elegy, or treat masculinity as either simple fulfillment or transgression of normative expectations, our examination of elegiac gender remains limited. The system is more dynamic than an “either, or” scenario can explain.

### The Male Body and the Homosocial Concerns of Gender Formulation<sup>18</sup>

This study expands the discussion of elegiac gender by showing how the elegists negotiate their male identity not only in terms of a male-female relationship, but also in those that include various male figures. The lover is not the only male in elegy, after all, but along what lines do males interact in elegy? Obviously they are often in competition for the interest of the *puella*, and are even at times in competition *with* her, but is the poet-lover’s supposed effeminacy the

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<sup>17</sup> Beauvoir (1989), trans. H. M. Parshley.

<sup>18</sup> I use the term “homosocial” broadly to refer to the social relationship between men of similar status (at least within the elegiac text, if not within the reality of Roman socio-economic status) whether they are amatory rivals or merely peers. Sedgwick (1985) uses the term specifically to reference the bond between two rivals for the same woman in a love triangle; this use could also be applicable here, although not all interactions I discuss in this dissertation are between amatory rivals.

This examination will also include consideration of elegiac pederastic poetry, which would indicate homosexual not homosocial interaction, but the overall interest in looking at the male beloved is to clarify the masculinity of the lover. The lover defines himself against the effeminate *puer/iuvenis*, which indicates an interest in his position to other adult males (*viri*).

primary issue in this male-centered dynamic or are there other meaningful concerns? The dynamic between the poet-lover and the rival has been discussed, but even here the competition between these two figures has been addressed in the interest of uncovering more about the *puella*, such as how both males are colleagues in their objectification of the female.<sup>19</sup> The focus of such examinations still fundamentally lies with the lover—*puella* dynamic, not with that of the opposing male rivals in the love-triangle. By examining the elegiac male body's relationship to normative gender paradigms, this shift produces a more delimited masculinity for the elegiac lover.

It makes sense to engage with the gender dynamics of elegy through the relationship between the lover and other men. Scholars have attempted to explain elegy's interest in gender inversion as a means of coping with and expressing anxiety over the changing status and roles of elite men during the rise of Augustus.<sup>20</sup> The submission of the poet-lover and his rejection of the standard

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<sup>19</sup> Sharrock (2000) discusses how the various *amici* in the *Monobiblos* contribute to the 'construction of realism' that is present throughout Propertius' work, as these *amici* "stand in for the reader" and offer a viewpoint different from the lover's (267). While her argument takes into account the male-male interaction in elegy—as the reader is intended to occupy the privileged position of subject and thereby assume the view of the male—this reveals more about how the *puella* is viewed by the lover (and other males) than it does about the interaction of the lover with his rival or *amici*.

<sup>20</sup> Some who point to this as motivation for elegy's gender structure include Dufallo (2007) 74-98, who notes the reframing of evocations of the dead, through the orations of Cynthia and Cornelia, as a response to this political upheaval; Fear (2005) 24-26 also addresses other social issues such as the increased significance of *otium* with the *pax Augusta*, as well as Augustus' moral programs; James (2003) 32 claims that elegy "uses the figure of the *docta puella* as a means of both attempting to hold these changes at bay and coming to grips with them"; Janan (2001) 12 states that elegy reflects this period of change through the divided subject of the lover; McCarthy (1998) argues that the poet-lover takes on the role of *servus amoris* to reflect his status among the Roman elite and to explore the potential to subvert the power of those of higher status; Skinner (1997b) 25 [also quoted in James (2003) 32 fn 128] claims that "Roman discourses on sex and gender had largely to do with the currents of political, social, and economic power and their erratic, seemingly arbitrary, workings. Disturbing changes in the social milieu were represented as deviations from sexual norms; violations of 'natural' gender relations bear witness to the confusion caused by economic realignment and patterns of class mobility. Laments of distressed mythic heroines and ineffectual lovers seem to project anxieties triggered by a radical shift in the structure of government."



paths to public service reflect the limited socio-political opportunities available under a new system of government with less room at the top. David Fredrick most thoroughly presents this argument, comparing the reflection of Rome's political transition from Republic to Principate in elegy's gender inversion to that which occurred in Greece by the third century B.C.E. He states that "the citizen's physical role in [the] political game changed" when the "hoplite-*kinaidos* opposition fundamental to the classical construction of the male body" broke down in the absence of an expectation that all citizen men would serve in the military.<sup>21</sup> Without these traditional avenues of performing masculinity, there arose a "changed relation to the ensemble of institutions inherited from the polis, a slippage of the male body from its prior definition through collective warfare."<sup>22</sup> This fundamental change in the formulation of the citizen's identity was then literarily mirrored in Callimachus' rejection of Homer and his themes.<sup>23</sup> Tying the uncertainty of the public sphere to the body and literary concerns, Fredrick claims that "elegy exposes the semiotic dilemma of the male body defined by a vanishing capacity for political action."<sup>24</sup> A changed relationship to the state results in a potentially redefined relationship to the male body and its traditional activities. In this way, the concerns reflected in the inversion of gender and new readings of the body are entangled in concerns of male interactions with other men—homosociality.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Fredrick (1997) 178.

<sup>22</sup> Fredrick (1997) 178.

<sup>23</sup> Fredrick (1997) 178.

<sup>24</sup> Fredrick (1997) 178-179 and 190.

<sup>25</sup> Heterosocial interaction is also changed with political transition, as political promotion centered more on an individual (Augustus) would inevitably change the dynamics of marriage alliances. This situation could be mirrored in a fictional relationship to a hypothetical *puella*, but that question is outside the reaches of this dissertation.

### Spectrum of Masculinity: a shifting paradigm of the lover

The body is a product of cultural construction, and, in this particular case, a culture in transition. The additional complexity of negotiating identity through a mixture of traditional and elegiac values does not yield a single monolithic ideology concerning the male body and the character's relationship with that body. Instead, it asks what kind of masculinity is more appropriate and what figures and bodies represent these values and when. For example, when the elegist problematizes the values and masculinity of the soldier, as Propertius does in 4.4 or Ovid in *Amores* 3.8, he undermines the validity of this figure's position as a traditional model, which, in turn, introduces the possibility that the fundamental difference between elegiac and traditional values is not so great. The renegotiation of identity in terms of the body, therefore, does not reflect a normative construction of masculinity, in which the lover automatically slides toward the effeminate end of the scale and traditional figures maintain their decorum. But while the author destabilizes the integrity of the soldier at one point, at others he relies on this figure as a traditional model of honor when he uses *militia amoris* as a way of elevating the poet-lover's status. All of the elegiac males exist and move within the space between effeminacy and masculinity, as the poet-lover constructs the bodies of other males in order to manipulate their relative position to his own masculinity. Thus, masculinity is not secure for any elegiac character.

My approach to elegiac gender fits in with this and what Ronnie Ancona and Ellen Greene call a "scholarly shift" that "see[s] amatory texts as a site for very complicated negotiations concerning traditional notions of gender,

sexuality, and power politics.”<sup>26</sup> Instead of limiting the question to a simple bipolar system in which the lover is either weakened or aggressive, this dissertation will approach the lover’s physical and masculine identity as being fluid in nature, as it operates on a spectrum where identity moves between the two terms of masculinity and effeminacy.<sup>27</sup>

Some scholars, such as Wyke, have indicated that elegy itself encourages a reading in agreement with the lover’s self-proclaimed *mollitia*:<sup>28</sup>

In the genre of Propertian love elegy, however, the narrating *ego* is constituted as an effeminate voice. Paradoxically, it is sexual impotence rather than potency that marks the figure of the male lover of elegy, for he is represented as languishing almost perpetually outside his beloved’s door. He submits, not imposes, is weaponless rather than armed, soft not hard, and feminine not masculine.<sup>29</sup>

This bipolar system in which elegy assumes the lesser term has colored many assumptions concerning the lover’s masculine identity and body, perhaps to the

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<sup>26</sup> Ancona and Greene (2005) 2. For others who approach elegy’s configuration of identity in terms of instability, see Welch (2005) who examines the reinterpretation of identity as reflected in the Roman monuments of Augustus’ city in marble versus Propertius’ “written city.” For questions of gender, see Fredrick (1997), as well as Greene (1995), (1998), (2005a), and (2005b), whose interest has primarily been to demonstrate the ways in which the lover assumes the masculine values of epic, for example through *militia amoris* or heroic mythological *exempla*, in order to dominate the *puella*. Greene (2005a) 212 states that “Propertius...not only undermines the feminine persona he establishes for himself in the *Monobiblos*, but also reveals a discourse that constantly defies classification.”

On questions of poetic program and movement between the bipolar values of elegy and epic, see DeBrohun (2003) who, in her discussion of the poetic program of Propertius Book 4, claims that “ambiguity or tension is the point” and that the poet sets up “a third level of discourse, a ‘manipulable space’ that operates between the two poles, that is a place where they [the two poles] might ‘meet’” (24-25).

My approach also recognizes variability, but I focus on how the lover engages with both paradigms—that of elegiac effeminacy and normative masculinity—to define his physical body with a conscious interest in how he presents his masculinity, not only in his interactions with the *puella* but also with Roman men in general.

<sup>27</sup> For similar approaches to the intersection of homosocial concerns with the body and gender identity in other genres, see Wray (2001). My approach to elegiac masculinity is similar to Wray’s view of Catullus’ multiple *personae*, which “occupy, from moment to moment, stances of hyper-masculine aggression, of provocatively effeminate delicacy, and stances at points in between or located on other axes.” (209). Also, on 2<sup>nd</sup> century oratory, see Gleason (1995), who treats identification as taking someone’s “gender temperature” where identity fluctuates between two opposite poles and one measures where it stands at any particular moment (60).

<sup>28</sup> For discussion of the role of *mollitia* in elegy, see Kennedy (1993) especially 31-38, Wyke (1994), Skinner (1997a) especially 142 f.

<sup>29</sup> Wyke (1994) 120 [qtd also in Fear (2005) 23].

point of neglecting evidence supporting a different conclusion.<sup>30</sup> The *mollitia* asserted in certain instances, such as when the lover is unable to perform sexually or passively awaits the *puella*, is generalized to define the body of the lover even outside of those contexts. As will be shown, however, the lover's identity, mirrored in the characterization of his body, is more than the sum of these few episodes. The lover may be impotent at certain times, as in *Amores* 3.7 where the Ovidian lover is unable to perform sexually with his *puella*, but these conditions are not permanent. Within the very same poem lamenting impotence, the lover reconfigures this affliction as a symptom of his sexual potency and success, rather than weakness and failure. The unfixed identity of the lover shifts according to the need of the narrative context. Elegiac male identity is constantly in flux, both within and between poems, with the result that no figure can be pinned down to a single identity.

If the reader does not automatically assume the effeminacy and weakness of the lover, one may see the male elegiac body as a means to revealing evidence of traditional Roman values operating in conjunction with the elegiac effeminacy conventionally associated with the lover. While the elegist might present the literary world of elegy as an alternative to that of the real world, he still functions to some extent with concerns directed toward normative values. The lover's body may be tempered by a softness that arises in interaction with the *puella*; in those contexts where the lover acts in proximity to other males (such as with either his amatory colleagues or rivals), however, he tends to reinforce, rather

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<sup>30</sup> Fear (2005) sees the lover as a liminal *iuvenis* who has not crossed over into the *duritia* of adulthood, but maintains the *mollitia* of youth and its concomitant effeminacy. While Fear's argument about elegy reflecting an acceptable period of youthful transgression (a *tirocinium adulescentiae*) within Roman society is plausible, the liminality of the narrator's position does not transfer wholly to the physical body and certainly not to the point that the lover can be read as either a *pathicus* or *cinaedus*, as Fear claims (23).

than undermine, his masculinity. He assumes characteristics toward the positive side of the spectrum of traditional masculinity in order to be more competitive within a conventional corporeal framework.

### My Approach to the Body

Even through a cursory reading of the elegiac corpus, the body emerges as a fundamental element in the execution of elegy's amatory narrative, and as such it can be read from varying perspectives to answer vastly different questions. When the male body appears, the message may be as literarily, politically, and culturally charged as that connected to the female body. Most recent scholarship on elegiac bodies has fixated upon the body not as body, but as a tool for uncovering the underlying program of elegiac poetics.<sup>31</sup> In its role as poetic metaphor, the male body has elucidated questions of genre or style. This study, however, will bypass most questions of poetics in order to uncover the implications of the physical body for gender identity. Toward this goal, the body will be treated primarily as a physical body within an amatory narrative.

While the main focus of this study is to demonstrate masculinity in all of its complexity as it is revealed by elegiac discourse on the male body, it will be necessary to include considerations of the *puella's* body as well. As noted above, the lover often defines his masculinity in contrast to the feminine, and the *puella* emerges as a significant physical foil for the lover's own body. The inclusion of a

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<sup>31</sup> On the female body, see especially Wyke (2002) and additional bibliography in fn. 5. On the poet's body, see Keith (1999) 41-62 who traces the conventional metaphorical connection between an author's body and his literary text in elegy through the filter of Roman rhetorical theory, with discussion on lovesickness, impotence, and the elegiac limp; also DeBrohun (1994) for a discussion of Propertius Book 4 and how change of clothing reflects change in poetic program. For further general discussion on the confusion of terms for the body and poetic style, see Fantham (1972) 173-174.

female body will yield a more nuanced reading of the lover's body than is possible if read only against the ideal male body. By engaging with both genders, this study will highlight the differences between the truly feminine qualities of the *puella's* form and the effeminate characteristics of the lover's body.

Furthermore, for several reasons, my argument will be based, at times, not on direct reference to a physical body, but on the absence of the body. There is meaning to be derived not only from the physically present body, but also from those instances in which it does not appear. Often, this distancing from the body occurs because of the risk inherent in visual exposure. Physical display of the body introduces the potential for liminalization within ancient Rome, because an individual's actions were constantly subject to the evaluation of social peers. Such critical readings have the power to color masculine identity. In those contexts that may introduce greater harm to masculine identity (such as in the private setting of the bedroom), the lover's (or his peers') bodies tend to appear only minimally or become completely inaccessible within the narrative. At other times, the lover's body is absent, because he presents a metaphorical body reflecting poetic conventions (for instance, with amatory wounds). In these cases, the poet-lover's risk is minimized, and he is able apply the metaphor as needed for the narrative. Finally, the poet-lover occasionally uses the body to cast accusations of effeminacy upon his rivals. In these instances, the lover problematizes his rival's masculine status by tying him to a corrupted, and corruptible, body, while the poet-lover himself is defined by his own intellect (*ingenium*).

### Limitations and Extent of Study

The question of the male's relationship to his body, regardless of who that male character is, ultimately refers back to the lover and his pointed construction of elegiac bodies for his own goals. The textual focus of this dissertation, therefore, is on those elegiac texts that specifically reflect the poet-lover's aesthetic and gender values. Due to this constraint, the primary texts of interest include the elegy of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid's *Amores*. All of these texts presenting the narrative of an amatory relationship reveal the dynamics of elegiac gender as formulated by the first-person narrator of the poet-lover. The didactic text of the *Ars Amatoria* offers a slightly altered perspective, because the lover of the *Amores* acts as *praeceptor amoris* (teacher of love) in an attempt to set guidelines for being a proper lover and beloved in everything from behavior to appearance. This didactic text reveals and confirms the conscious construction of the aesthetic systems operating within the other elegiac texts. In the interest of limiting discussion to the poet-lover's identity and relationship with males in an amatory context, neither Ovid's exile poetry nor the epistolary *Heroides* have been considered. Although the latter may be an invaluable source for the female reading of the male body and offer further insight about the male's relationship to the body in elegy, these works do not reflect the conscious construction of male identity by a first-person poet-lover. As needed, other genres, particularly Augustan age epic and history, have also been consulted, in an attempt to anchor the alterity of the elegiac world to the conventional values reflected in those genres.

## Chapter Overview

For my examination of the male body, I have isolated four key topics to organize the chapters of my dissertation: beauty, infirmity, wounds, and visual accessibility. The first two chapters outline the poet-lover's identity in comparison to the two elegiac beloveds. Chapter Two illustrates how the poet-lover relegates the conventional terms of beauty to a specific paradigm outlined for the *puella* and the male beloved (*iuvenis*) alone. Connection to physical beauty within elegy produces accusations of sexual passivity for adult males, and, significantly, the lover excludes any possibility that he may fit into this system himself. To eliminate this potential, the lover demonstrates the irrelevance of his own body and its appearance for questions of his own elegiac identity by, instead, emphasizing his mind. Despite dissociation from the body in this instance, the physicality of the elegiac male body is vital to the construction of the poet-lover's masculine identity, as is shown when he also prescribes an alternate aesthetic paradigm for lovers outside of that defined for the two beloveds. The attempt to outline a proper appearance for the adult lover surfaces again in Chapter Three, where elegiac lovesickness and impotence serve as much more than clichéd images of unsuccessful love. It is in this context that the elegist openly embraces the physicality of his body and acknowledges the role of the corporeal as part of his poetic identity, when he adopts the sickly body that characterizes the unsuccessful lover. This paradigm of infirmity set against that formulated on the beloveds' beauty underscores the conscious segregation of the aesthetic terms of the lover's appearance from those of the beloveds. In this way, while laying claim to a degree of effeminacy through a



connection to the unwell body, the lover maintains distance from the truly feminine or effeminate beloveds.

The last two topics, wounds and visual accessibility, involve the poet-lover's negotiation of physical identity in the context of other adult male bodies. In these instances, we will see a greater reluctance from the lover to embrace any type of effeminacy. Chapter Four addresses a key elegiac opposition embodied in the soldier and lover through the significance of the wound and the physical violation implicated in that physical sign. Through the elegiac trope of *militia amoris*, the poet-lover asserts that he endures wounds of his own kind of warfare in the pursuit of his *puella*. With this comparison, the elegist pits the elegiac lover's identity against the more traditional ideas of *Romanitas* and masculinity that are represented by the Roman soldier. Using this same sign, the poet disrupts and reconfigures the soldier through the very normative values that should guarantee his position. Through questions of violability and honor, the lover is able to displace the soldier and his wounds to carve out a better place for himself in this system. Chapter Five continues with more global concerns, as it explores the risk to masculinity involved in being visually accessible. This discussion uncovers the level of exposure and the terms of visual scrutiny applied to adult male bodies. The modes of criticism allowed for various characters are influenced by the extent to which a character is interchangeable with the poet-lover himself. Due to this correlation, these scenes that mostly entail spying lend insight not only into the poet-lover's own visual accessibility, but also into the relationships the lover has with his peers and the rival/soldier, despite the lack of actual interaction.

In his navigation of the space between positive and negative social valences or masculine and effeminate gender identities, the lover veers more toward one pole or the other, but in every aspect he finds strength in weakness or weakness in his opponent's strength. His identity is formulated as a contradiction of terms: he reveals decorum in the indecorous, he secures potency through impotence, he seeks protection in vulnerability, and he exerts control while exposed. The vacillation of the significance behind these terms reveals instability in the normative system from which they are borrowed, yet his reconfiguration of their meaning to some extent relies on the values of that same system. Not only must the poet-lover constantly resecure his identity, but those males who live wholly within the non-literary world of normative values must as well. Even the line drawn between the male and female has been blurred in the lover's conventional claim of servility to the *puella*. In the next chapter, I explore how the balance between female and male begins to be reestablished by the lover's adoption of a more conventional formulation of physical beauty.

## Chapter II:

### Moving Beyond Beauty with Elegy's Male Characters

#### Introduction

Beauty poses a problem for elegy's poet-lover.<sup>32</sup> Inhabiting a genre so geared toward the visualization of sensualized places and beautiful beloveds, the lover is surrounded by beauty, and yet distances his own identity from identification with the beautiful. As both the inspiration and poetic embodiment of his verses,<sup>33</sup> the *puella's*<sup>34</sup> image dominates and punctuates the discourse of the elegiac narrative on multiple levels.<sup>35</sup> The enduring presence of the *puella's* physical body generates an elegiac paradigm of beauty employing conventional terms and arrangements of those elements, which may then be used as a basis for examining the corporeal discourse of elegiac beauty as a whole. Even at this most basic level of reading, the physical body does not lack complexity, as physical appearance is intertwined with significant questions beyond the nature of aesthetic judgment: gender, social *mores*, and elegiac identity. The degree to

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<sup>32</sup> James (2003) 36 outlines in detail the definition of elegiac lover that I will use throughout. Most importantly, as a *persona* of the author himself, the poet-lover claims the status of impoverished poet and rejects the occupations and poetry of the public sphere. He claims fidelity to a single *puella* at a time and has some success with his beloveds, but ultimately his identity resides in failure with the hope of future success.

<sup>33</sup> On the *puella* as a metaphorical embodiment of poetic practice and form, see fn. 5.

<sup>34</sup> I use *puella* here, because the *puer* as beloved is a secondary consideration within Roman elegy. For a brief discussion on the preference of heterosexual relationships in elegy, see James (2003) 9-12. She asserts that this preference is due to elegy's focus on gender inversion, which would not be as productive in same-sex relationships.

<sup>35</sup> The metapoetic reading, while useful for determining the symbolic significance beneath descriptions of the body, neglects the implications of the actual body within the poetry, which this study will focus on.

which this system can then be applied to the male bodies of elegy uncovers one facet of the gender dynamics at play within this seemingly light poetry: the closer a figure is to the poet-lover in status, the less he becomes subject to the parameters of elegiac beauty and the more his identity is formulated from factors other than physical beauty. The ultimate result of this system is that the poet-lover is the figure most insulated from the terms of physical beauty that bind the *puella*.

Although the poet-lover pointedly distances his own identity from conventional categories of physical beauty, this separation does not signal ambivalence about the physical appearance of the lover or Roman man (*vir*), but, contrarily, highlights the difference in appropriate aesthetic appearance for himself and the beloveds. The elegiac paradigm of beauty is established by his absence from that value system. Both explicitly and implicitly, the lover carefully carves out a paradigm of appropriate physical appearance for himself that excludes those factors that have been identified with either of his love objects: the *puella* or the *puer/iuuenis*.<sup>36</sup> Physical appearance or beauty is important for outlining each elegiac identity, yet the appropriate aesthetic differs for each category of elegiac character. Furthermore, within the value system of elegy, an identity associated with the physicality of an attractive body yields no advantages for the lover, but instead can negate the narrator's role as elegiac lover. The character tied to his body through beauty is no longer able to act as subject within the amatory narrative, and with this lack of subjectivity within the elegiac world follows a lack of masculinity in the material world. While the

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<sup>36</sup> Murgatroyd (1977) 111 fn. 25 notes that *iuuenis* and *puer* are both used for Marathus. Propertius uses *puer* at 2.15.17-22, as does Ovid at *Amores* 1.1.20 and 2.1.5-6. The term *iuuenis* is used of Hylas in Propertius 1.20.

poet-lover often cultivates a status that may be characterized as effeminate in his interaction with the *puella*, his own identity never shifts so far as to be irredeemably effeminate. In fact, in the question of beauty, he stands well within the limits of normative masculine values by placing himself outside that physical aesthetic.

Even within this system, the lover is always looking for something more than simple beauty in other characters as well. The *puella* and *iuvenis* are not completely lacking in development outside of the parameters of beauty. Their status as beloveds is dependent upon possessing beauty, but, as occasional reflections of the lover, their identity requires something more to reflect his complexity. Therein lies the poet-lover's complicated relationship with beauty: he creates an elaborate system of beauty for the beloveds, and not only must he be excluded to preserve his own masculinity, but the terms of the beloveds' association within that system must be pointedly controlled as well.

While the interest of this study lies primarily with elegiac discourse on the male body, there are several reasons to begin this examination with the female. Although much recent scholarship has focused on the *puella's* beauty, I will start with this figure not out of specific interest in the *puella per se*, but because her body is the one most visibly exposed in elegy. The sheer prominence of the *puella's* beauty within the elegiac narrative necessitates an extensive examination of her body before moving on to that of the male. While the *puer's/iuvenis'* body does not appear as frequently within the elegiac *corpus*, his presence is all the more important for uncovering potential disparity in physical characterization that derives not from elegiac role (as both *iuvenis* and *puella* are both beloveds), but from differences in biological sex. The manner in which the *puer's* body is

treated here will serve as a hinge to investigating the relationship between the poet-lover and physical beauty. In the interplay between the characterizations of the *puer/iuvenis* and the poet-lover, we will see that the elegiac role of each influences the nature of their physicality within the narrative. By distinguishing the degree to which each figure plays into the elegiac paradigm of beauty, we can better understand the underlying gender system of elegy, as well as the poet-lover's manipulation of the corporeal discourse in his effort to carefully craft his physical image.

### Beauty and the *Puella's* Status in Elegy

All three elegists emphasize the centrality of beauty for the *puella's* characterization. It is the physical beauty of the *puella* that fascinates the poets.<sup>37</sup> At times, her body is foregrounded and becomes the central image of a poem, while the poet-lover offers a detailed *ekphrasis* of the *puella's* body as if it were artwork.<sup>38</sup> At other times, the description of her body is a detail of the background, as the poet shifts his attention to the larger issues of the poem. Regardless of perspective and emphasis, the physical beauty of the *puella* is ever-present within the text and functions not only as the primary means of categorizing her identity, but also serves as one of the fundamental components

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<sup>37</sup> Laigneau (1999) 17. Laigneau's analysis of the *puella* offers an idealistic reading of the amatory relationship between lover and *puella* that results in discussions of the relative sincerity of each of the poets (as in her discussion of Ovid on page 18). But her study is useful for differentiating shades of meaning in the terminology employed in the description of the *puella*.

<sup>38</sup> Sharrock (1991) 36-49 discusses Ovid's story of Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses* as a commentary on Roman elegy's description of the *puella* as an art object. She specifically addresses the comparison of the *puella* to mythological heroines painted by Apelles in Propertius 1.2.21-22 (39), Propertius 1.3 (41-43), and Ovid, *Amores* 1.7.51-52 (41) as evidence. See also Breed (2003) on the mixing of references to ekphrasis and realism in the figure of Cynthia in Propertius 1.3. Downing (1990) argues that the *praeceptor amoris* of *Ars Amatoria* 3 is a reversal of Pygmalion, in that he attempts to make real women into artworks.

of elegiac discourse on beauty, against which all other manifestations of the aesthetic may be compared.

In his didactic poem, the *Ars Amatoria*, tailored as a guide to becoming, being, and remaining an elegiac *puella*, Ovid indicates that even a woman's *potential* status as a beloved is contingent upon her possession of beauty. After claiming that most women require much *ars* to be presentable in public, as he discovered once after arriving unexpectedly to visit a *puella*, Ovid implies that beauty is essential to female identity, and, as such, must be cultivated if not naturally present<sup>39</sup> (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.251-258):

*non mihi venistis, Semele Ledeve, docendae,  
perque fretum falso, Sidoni, vecta bove  
aut Helene, quam non stulte, Menelae, reposcis,  
tu quoque non stulte, Troice raptor, habes.  
turba docenda venit pulchrae turpesque puellae,  
pluraque sunt semper deteriora bonis.  
formosae non artis opem praeceptaque quaerunt;  
est illis sua dos, forma sine arte potens.*

You did not come to be taught, Semele or Leda,  
or you, Sidonian girl, carried across the deep on a false bull,  
or you Helen, whom you, Menelaus, not foolishly, demand back,  
and you not foolishly, Trojan thief, hold her.  
The masses come to be taught, both the pretty and repulsive girls,  
and always there are more of the worse than of the good ones.  
The beautiful do not seek the resources and principles of art;  
their gift is a beauty powerful without artifice.<sup>40</sup>

For women of all categories, whether the heroic women of myth or the majority of Roman women, beauty is indicated as a necessity for engaging in amatory

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<sup>39</sup> This opposition of natural beauty to that gained by artifice is a common elegiac theme. Ovid takes the opposite stance (against artifice) to that he takes here in *Amores* 1.14, when the *puella*'s hair falls out due to excessive styling; Propertius consistently prefers more natural beauty, as seen in Propertius 1.2 and 2.18.; and Tibullus 1.8.15-16 states that Phloe does not require such artifice. Sharrock (1991) 38-39 discusses ancient theory on art and nature (referencing specifically Aristotle, *Poetics* 1461b) in relation to her discussion on beauty for Pygmalion in the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>40</sup> All translations of Latin or Greek texts are my own.

pursuit. The women of myth, however, do not come for beauty advice; they are already renowned for their beauty—although significantly not for their successful love affairs. The world of the conventional elegiac *puella* (including Corinna, Cynthia, Delia, and Nemesis, for instance) is a world of the realities of contemporary Rome mixed with the legendary *exempla* of erotic mythology. They are similar to the mythological heroines and goddesses, but not the same. The *puella* is one step removed from the mythological figures of Semele, Leda, or Europa, but does not require the help of a *praeceptor amoris*. Meanwhile, Ovid’s “real” women of Rome, his *puellae*-in-training who live solely in the real world, are in dire need of Ovid’s *ars*.

The need for an aesthetic categorization of these classes of women—the mythological heroine, the elegiac *puella*, and the real-world *puella*—reveals a disruption in the elegiac universe that arises once Ovid’s narrator has become *praeceptor amoris* instead of poet-lover. The narrative dimensions of elegy were simpler when the lover was a narrative character involved in an amatory affair with the *puella*, but they become more complicated when dealing with the supposedly real women of contemporary Rome. Consider Boucher’s discussion of Propertius 2.2 and 2.3, where he recognizes a mixture of realism and idealization in the description of Cynthia.<sup>41</sup> Her physical circumstances are realistic: she goes swimming, sunbathing, and walking at Baiae. Although she participates in these activities that would expose her to the sun, she is still described as *candida*. She is a creature of the real Roman world, and yet she is not

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<sup>41</sup> For discussion on the influence of reality and the elegiac aesthetic, see Veyne (1988), who believes that there is no connection to reality in the construction of these *puellae*. Arguing for more nuance in Veyne’s analysis, Kennedy (1993) 92-100 states that ideology is not disconnected from the real, even if the *puellae* themselves are literary constructions.



affected by the reality of that world. Boucher argues that Cynthia is *candida*, not because that is realistic, but because it is the color that is appropriate for the “perfect beauty” (*beauté parfaite*) of Greek paintings.<sup>42</sup> This incongruity marks Cynthia and other elegiac *puellae* as liminal figures straddling both worlds. They inhabit the real world, but the poet controls their physical beauty. The didactic work of the *Ars Amatoria*, however, shifts the narrative register of the *puella*. Ovid’s prospective students strive to cultivate what the mythological women achieve naturally: a *forma potens*.<sup>43</sup> Because they inhabit a world different from that of the figures of mythology or elegy, they require Ovid’s *ars* to accomplish this *forma*. As Eric Downing argues, the narrator essentially wants to turn the real woman of the *Ars Amatoria* into artwork, as Ovid dictates that “the contrived artifice should substitute for the natural.”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, there are different classes of women, and the beauty of the real women must become as constructed as the literary women in order to be considered elegiac *puellae*. Idealized beauty is the goal, and in the real world this requires make-up.

This is not the world of Propertius or Tibullus, but it is governed by the same conventions. Physical beauty is not only primary, but is *essential* to the elegiac identity of the *puella*, who, in order to play her role of coy mistress, must

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<sup>42</sup> Boucher (1965) 434 argues that the description of Cynthia as *candida* must be symbolic, because the swimming, sunbathing, and walking at Baiae would not yield this fair complexion for an Italian woman. He draws parallels of this to Briseis (at Propertius 2.9.10) to demonstrate that she, as a woman from the East and a captive by the sea, would also not be naturally *candida*. They are both prototypes of ideal beauty.

<sup>43</sup> Sharrock (1991) 45 defines *forma* as both “shape” and “beauty”. For the phrase *forma potens*, cf. Propertius 2.5.27f and 3.20.7. Gibson (2003) 200-201 states that Ovid’s reuse of this phrase with the addition of *sine arte* marks a difference between the *puellae* of earlier elegy who do not require such help and the real women of Rome who do. He also points out the implied difference of the terms *formosus* and *pulcher*, which are normally “used interchangeably.”

<sup>44</sup> Downing (1990) 240.

be able to attract men in order to reject them.<sup>45</sup> It is not a general concept of beauty that grants these women power over men, but one directly connected to body and shape. Ovid's mythological women are described as *formosae* (well-formed), a term whose literal meaning indicates a value associated with their *forma*, their bodies.<sup>46</sup> In her discussion differentiating the terms *pulcher* and *formosa*, Laigneau defines the beauty denoted by the term *formosa* as a more physical type of beauty that is always erotic, while *pulcher*, a more ideal and abstract type of beauty, is less tied to the body.<sup>47</sup> Significantly, it is the term *formosa* that the elegiac poets prefer.<sup>48</sup> Further, as we see with the mythological *exempla* provided by Ovid, beauty does not indicate success in the overall love affair, but merely successful attraction. In his role of *praeceptor amoris* and as elegiac poet, Ovid's concern lies not with the possibility of successful outcomes, but with the initial pursuit of love as a goal in itself.<sup>49</sup>

These same rules outlined above by Ovid apply to the true elegiac *puella*, as the same correspondence between beauty and poetic status is confirmed in those instances where the *puella* loses her position as beloved. The final two poems of Propertius' third book of elegy mark the end of Cynthia's position as

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<sup>45</sup> James (2003) 167-183 for discussion on the importance of specific aspects of beauty. James states that hair is the *puella's* "primary attraction" for potential lovers (168). Hair acts as "the major signifier of her [the *puella's*] state of beauty, which is her means of livelihood" (172-173). She also discusses the danger of pregnancy for the *puella's* occupation (175f). While James emphasizes beauty as essential to the *puella's* profession, I shift this point and argue that without these attributes of beauty, the *puella* does not only become unsuccessful in her "profession" but loses her status as *puella* as well. It is not just a matter of economics, but of fundamental identity. Without the ability to attract men with beauty, she would no longer *be* a *puella*.

<sup>46</sup> My translation of the adjective, *formosus*, will vary, depending upon context. Even when a more broad term, like "beautiful," is used, the adjective alludes to physical form.

<sup>47</sup> Laigneau (1999) 20. She states that only in Catullus 86 does the term *formosus* indicate a more abstract, intellectual type of beauty.

<sup>48</sup> Laigneau (1999) 20 notes that elegy alone makes up more than half of all uses of the term *formosus* in Latin.

<sup>49</sup> The same is true with the lover, in whose case pursuit, not success, is the goal in elegy. In fact, in the case of the lover, success would bring about further change of identity, as the key characteristics of the lover, whose temporary success stirs hope for the future, are his hopelessness and dejection.

mistress, when Propertius declares that he has been cured of his love for her. His wounds have begun to close and he has reached the other side of the storm of passions that he has suffered (3.24.8-20 and 3.25.1-4). Many have read the separation of the lover from Cynthia in the final poems of book three as a symbol of Propertius' abandonment of erotic love elegy, with both Boucher and Fear reading the disavowal of Cynthia as a break with the poet's former self.<sup>50</sup> Undoubtedly, this motive is part of the point behind these poems. If Cynthia is a metapoetic embodiment of the text, then the lover's refutation of her physical appearance can logically be transferred to a similar disinterest in elegiac verse.

My interest lies in demonstrating how the degradation of Cynthia's beauty corresponds to a loss of status as his *puella* within the narrative. Along with his declaration of freedom from the *puella*'s power, Propertius exposes her beauty as false (Propertius 3.24.1-8):

*falsa est ista tuae, mulier, fiducia formae,  
 olim elegis nimium facta superba meis.  
 noster amor tales tribuit tibi, Cynthia, laudes:  
 versibus insignem te pudet esse meis.  
 mixtam te varia laudavi saepe figura,  
 cum quod non esses esse putaret Amor;  
 et color est totiens roseo collatus Eoo,  
 cum tibi quaesitus candor in ore foret.*

False is this confidence you have in your beauty, woman,  
 made too proud for a long while in my elegies.  
 My love gave such praise to you, Cynthia:  
 I am ashamed that you were deemed noteworthy in my verses.  
 Often I praised that you are mixed from a varied form,  
 because love thought that you were what you were not;  
 and your color was so often compared to the rosy Dawn,  
 although the brilliance in your face had been sought out.

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<sup>50</sup> Boucher (1965) 468 compares these two poems to the tradition of epigram, which includes themes of the lover's contempt and rejection of the self. Fear (2005) 27 reads this as Propertius distancing himself from his misspent youth. Also see DeBrohun (1994) 55-56 and Albrecht (1983) 71-71, who connects Propertius 3.24 and 3.25 to the programmatic struggle in 4.1a and 4.1b.

Now that Cynthia is no longer his *puella*, the truth behind her beauty is revealed. Her beauty was, in reality, either a construction of an infatuated poet-lover (*noster amor tales tribuit tibi...laudes*) or the result of deception.<sup>51</sup> The narrator claims that what beauty he saw was merely artifice, as her complexion was the result of make-up and not a natural brilliance (*quaesitus candor*).<sup>52</sup> While Ovid's *praeceptor* encourages the improvement of a *puella*'s appearance, the Propertian lover sees such methods as fraud. On top of this concern, Cynthia's "varied form" (*mixtam...varia...figura*) entails a more literal meaning of "a composite of different kinds of beauty," which further supports her fundamental characterization through physical beauty, as her form is a mixture of the attributes of other women.<sup>53</sup> The poet was never describing the characteristics of Cynthia as an individual, but instead a collection of idealized body parts. As such, Cynthia had been the perfect woman, but this tie is broken upon the poet's dismissal of Cynthia as *puella*. The contrast of the falseness (*falsa*) of Cynthia to her confidence (*fiducia*), Propertius' shame (*pudet*) to his previous evaluation of her as noteworthy (*insignem*), and the fact that she was not what he thought she was (*cum quod non esses esse putaret Amor*) marks not only the change in his estimation of her, but also the break in Cynthia's identity as *puella*. She should no longer have confidence in her *forma*, *color*, *candor*, her youth, or beautiful hair. Her identity is completely dependant upon her beauty, and, as she no longer

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<sup>51</sup> DeBrohun (1994) 55 briefly comments on this same point, stating that "we see Cynthia's *forma* as the poet's creation especially when the poet deconstructs her beauty" in Propertius 3.24.

<sup>52</sup> See Richardson (1977) 410-411, Fedeli (2005) 130, and Flach (2011) 210 for discussion of this phrase as an indication of false beauty. Flach and Gibson (2003) 177 note the parallel with Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.199, where such artifice is not considered dishonest but necessary.

<sup>53</sup> Richardson (1977) 410 translates the clause in this way, stating that Cynthia is essentially a composite of attributes of other women. Cf. also Camps (1985) 165 for this interpretation of *mixtam...varia...figura*.

fulfills the role of beloved for him, this beauty disintegrates at the moment of loss of interest.

Cynthia's beauty has lost its power over the lover in the present (in 3.24), but old age is presented as a concern for the *puella*'s near future in 3.25.<sup>54</sup> The poet-lover's rejection again is paired with the disintegration of Cynthia's *forma* (Propertius 3.25.11-18):

*at te celatis aetas gravis urgeat annis  
et veniat formae ruga sinistra tuae;  
vellere tum cupias albos a stirpe capillos  
a speculo rugas increpitante tibi.  
exclusa inque vicem fastus patiare superbos,  
et quae fecisti facta queraris anus.  
has tibi fatales cecinit mea pagina diras:  
eventum formae disce timere tuae.*

But may burdensome age beset you with hidden years  
and may unsightly wrinkles fall upon your beauty;  
then may you want to pluck out the white hairs by the roots  
with the mirror now mocking your wrinkles.  
And shut out, may you suffer haughty arrogance in turn,  
and now, an old woman, complain of these things that I did.  
My page sings these fatal curses for you:  
learn to fear the end of your beauty.

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<sup>54</sup> The threat of old age on youth's beauty is a common *topos* in amatory poetry. The consequences of aging differ significantly for female and male beloveds. In an argument that may also be applied to elegiac beloveds, Ancona (1994) 146 fn. 2 points out that, in Horace, "the male beloved, unlike the female, is allowed with age to escape unscathed from object status and thus to become a desiring subject... The female beloved, on the other hand, is made grotesque as an older, desiring subject..." For the effects of age on the *puella*, see Propertius 2.2, 2.18 (where old age matters for the *puella*, but not the lover), and 3.25. See Gibson (2003) 109-119 for discussion of the *puella*'s aging in Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.57-82.

On the aging of male beloveds, see Marathus' declining beauty in 1.9.13-16. Generally, old age is not treated in the same manner in Tibullus, who in 1.1, 1.6 (with the curse of old age falling only on the unfaithful, *quae fida fuit nulli*), and 2.2 anticipates growing old with his *puella*. Also cf. [Tibullus 3.3.7-10] and Propertius 2.25.

Once again, Propertius indicates that Cynthia has hidden her faults. Age will reveal the years that she tried to hide (*celatis annis*),<sup>55</sup> and she will begin to pluck out her white hairs as she examines these wrinkles in the mirror. Here the lover's lack of interest seen in 3.24 is generalized to all potential lovers, as the tables have turned and Cynthia becomes locked out.<sup>56</sup> This circumstance confirms her loss of status as *puella*. Within the elegiac paradigm of relationships, there is no such thing as an *exclusa puella*. In this genre, the *puella* has sole power to exclude or admit a lover who lacks the power to refuse her; he is freed, however, if she becomes an inappropriate object. Cynthia, due to the effects of aging and her exclusion from consideration as a beloved, is no longer a *puella*. In his characterization of Cynthia's fall in these final poems, Michael von Albrecht claims that the poet demythologizes her beauty (*demitizzando la sua bellezza*); he argues that the poet imposes the natural process of aging on Cynthia, which has a stronger effect than a magical curse.<sup>57</sup> In the end, she no longer embodies perfect beauty, but suffers the same effects of old age that mere mortals suffer. Because of the poet's dismantling of his *puella*, Cynthia no longer inhabits the elegiac world that straddles myth and contemporary Rome, but she has been relegated solely to that of Ovid's students in the *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Flach (2011) 212 connects the hiding of years to the application of make-up mentioned previously in 3.24. He also considers 3.24 and 3.25 to be parts of the same poem because of the conscious construction of symmetry in book 3 (209-210).

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Horace, *Carmina* 1.25 for the old woman shut out. Cf. Propertius 1.16, Tibullus 1.2, Ovid, *Amores* 1.6 for examples of the *exclusus amator*. In this context, with the end of her relationship with Propertius, it highlights the loss of her beauty with the loss of her status as *puella*.

<sup>57</sup> Albrecht (1983) 71.

<sup>58</sup> Propertius 4.7 and 4.8 can be seen as a flashback to the period when the lover is in a relationship with Cynthia or as an opportunity to hear another female narrator. These poems do not indicate that the relationship was still occurring within the frame of Book 4.

We see a similar, but temporary, renunciation of beauty and loss of status for Ovid's *puella*, when he becomes uninterested in her because she seeks gifts<sup>59</sup> (Ovid, *Amores* 1.10.9-14):

*nunc timor omnis abest animique resanuit error,  
nec facies oculos iam capit ista meos.  
cur sim mutatus quaeris? Quia munera poscis:  
haec te non patitur causa placere mihi.  
donec eras simplex, animum cum corpore amavi;  
nunc mentis vitio laesa figura tua est.*

Now all fear is absent and the error of my mind has healed,  
that beauty of yours no longer captivates my eyes.  
Why would I have changed, you ask? Because you demand gifts:  
this is the reason that does not allow you to please me.  
While you were simple, I loved your mind along with your body;  
now your form is harmed by the flaw of your mind.

The *puella*, who just lines earlier was to be compared to beautiful mythological women—Helen, Leda, and Amyclone (1-8)—has now lost all power over Ovid. With healing (*animique resanuit error*), her beauty is ineffectual (*nec facies oculos iam capit ista meos*), and, with greed (*mentis vitio*), her beauty becomes flawed (*laesa figura tua est*). Ovid's estimation of her and her vices affects the quality of her overall beauty. The interconnection between beauty and power over the lover is demonstrated here: without one, she cannot have the other.

While both Propertius' and Ovid's *puellae* lose their status as beloved, these passages speak to issues larger than the *puella*'s beauty. Her beauty indicates much more about the lover than about the *puella*. Immaterial in itself, her beauty is a construct of the lover's mind, a product of his poetry and *ars*.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> McKeown (1989) 287 also briefly notes the parallel of this passage with Propertius 3.24.1f.

<sup>60</sup> With these poems, Propertius is illustrating what Ovid alludes to directly. Ovid openly claims that *ars* is necessary for beauty (see *Ars Amatoria* 3), while Propertius attempts to hide the construction of the *puella* (in 1.2) by ostensibly preferring a more natural kind of beauty. See Sharrock (1991) 39-40 on Propertius 1.2 and how, despite his explicitly stated preference for natural beauty, Propertius reveals his role as artist through the use of Apelles and his

Generated by the poet-lover's gaze or his advice as *praeceptor amoris*, the *puella*'s beauty is a testament to his poetic skill and his status as lover.<sup>61</sup> Her identity, grounded in such a constructed beauty, is void without that gaze, and this status reveals the concealed power of the poet-lover. While seemingly passive in most interactions with the mistress herself, this redefinition of her beauty and her associated identity indicates the power of the poet over his creation.<sup>62</sup>

### The *Puella* as a Reflection of the Poet-Lover

While certainly key to her own identity, the significance of the *puella*'s beauty extends beyond herself to the poet-lover himself. Beauty may grant the *puella* power over a lover, but it also gives status to him as it lends support to his identity as lover (as well as poet and *praeceptor*) (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.103-114):

*forma dei munus; forma quota quaeque superbit?  
 pars vestrum tali munere magna caret.  
 cura dabit faciem; facies neglecta peribit,  
 Idaliae similis sit licet illa deae.  
 corpora si veteres non sic coluere puellae,  
 nec veteres cultos sic habuere viros.  
 si fuit Andromache tunicas induta valentes,  
 quid mirum? duri militis uxor erat.  
 scilicet Aiaci coniunx ornata venires,  
 cui tegumen septem terga fuere boum!  
 simplicitas rudis ante fuit; nunc aurea Roma est  
 et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes.*

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mythological *exempla*. Where Propertius attempts to hide his role as creator to some extent, Ovid's treatment of the same question confirms the subtext of Propertius' statement. The *puella* is a construct, and as such, her beauty must be gained by *ars*.

<sup>61</sup> Further, as seen in *Amores* 1.10.9-14, the *puella* asks not how *she* has changed, but how the *lover* has changed (*sim mutatus*). Again, the *puella*'s beauty has implications for the identity of the lover as well as herself.

Sharrock (1991) 43 complicates the world of the *praeceptor* by indicating that at *Ars* 3.309-310 the "real" women are compared to statues, just as the constructed *puellae* are.

<sup>62</sup> Sharrock (1991) 48 indicates that the treatment of the *puella* as art object, along with Ovid's Pygmalion story in the *Metamorphoses*, "draws attention to the creative control implicitly exercised in elegy. Modeling wax, sculpting ivory, writing elegy—all manufacture woman." See Spelman (1999) for Propertius' control over Cynthia.



Beauty is a gift of the gods; but how many excel in beauty?  
 A great majority of you are lacking that gift.  
 Attention will ensure appearance; a face neglected will be lost,  
 though it is similar to that of the Idalian goddess [Venus].  
 Though the girls of old did not tend to their bodies thus,  
 they also did not have lovers so refined.  
 Is it a surprise if Andromache was clothed in a sturdy tunic?  
 She was the wife of a hard soldier.  
 Perhaps you would come all dressed up, as the wife of Ajax,  
 whose clothing consisted of the seven hides of an ox!  
 Then there was unrefined simplicity; now Rome is covered in gold  
 and she possesses a mass of riches from the conquered world.

Again, the poet indicates that visual presentation is something for which most girls must care, as not many receive the gift of the gods. As his discussion develops, however, Ovid's advice expands beyond the question of convincing his reader that she must tend to her appearance (in order to draw the attention of a lover) to a correlation of a *puella's* beauty with her lover's identity. A girl must tend her beauty as much as she wishes to secure the affection of a lover of appropriate status: just as Andromache and the wife of Ajax replicate the heroic identity of their husbands in the manner of their dress (*tunicas valentes* and *tegumen septem terga furere boum*), so a beloved in contemporary Rome must make an effort to reflect her lover's refined (*cultus*) status in terms of her appearance.<sup>63</sup> The construction of an attractive *puella* moves beyond issues of erotic appeal and her own identity, as the poet-lover gains a bit of his own identity from that of his *puella*. The poet must construct a *puella* who moves within the top tiers of Rome's hierarchy, as she is an indication of his own status within the narrative, significantly not in terms of his own beauty, but just like Hector or Ajax, in terms

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<sup>63</sup> The significance of the participle, *cultus*, is that the state of refinement is not a natural characteristic of the person in question; it, along with the social status that it signifies, is something that must be tended. It is not natural, but cultivated.

of refinement (or lack thereof), occupation, character, and by extension a certain kind of masculinity.<sup>64</sup>

To fashion an identity at the highest tiers, one requires more than beauty. Although the passages discussed above exclude further criteria by which to evaluate a *puella*, both Propertius and Ovid make claims that features beyond physical beauty drive their interest.<sup>65</sup> In the following instance, Propertius states that Cynthia's capacity to inspire poetry fundamentally lies outside of the range of factors tied to beauty (Propertius 2.3.9-22):

*nec me tam facies, quamvis sit candida, cepit  
(lilia non domina sunt magis alba mea),  
nec de more comae per levia colla fluentes,  
non oculi, geminae, sidera nostra, faces,  
nec si quando Arabo lucet bombyce papilla  
(non sum de nihilo blandus amator ego),  
quantum quod posito formose saltat Iaccho  
egit ut euhantes dux Ariadna choros,  
et quantum Aeolio cum temptat carmina plectro  
par Aganippaeae ludere docta lyrae,  
et sua cum antiquae committit scripta Corinnae  
carminaque Erinnae non putat aequa suis.*

It is not so much her face, although it is radiant,  
(for lilies are not more fair than my mistress),  
nor the way her hair flows down her slender neck,

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<sup>64</sup> I am not considering the *puella*'s social status as a factor relevant to her role in creating identity for the poet-lover, because the fact is that within elegiac rhetoric she is appropriate for the lover. Her potential status is a question for another topic and not relevant to questions of how her body informs the lover's identity. For discussion on the *puella*'s social status, see James (2003) *passim*; Kennedy (1993) 86-100; Miller (2004) 61-63; Keith (2008) 103-107; Luck (1974) states that Cynthia "is certainly not the typical *materfamilias*... On the other hand, she is, for Propertius, in an entirely different class from the *puellae leves* or *viles*, or *scorta*" (20). He uses Ovid, *Amores* 1.10.21-24 to contrast the relationship of the *puellae* to the *meretrix*; while the *meretrix* takes money for her favors, the *puella* does it of her own will (30). I disagree with the rest of the discussion claiming that the *puellae* were "real" (30) and that the elegists "honestly believed in the equality of women" (31). For discussion of why women of varying statuses would appeal to the lover, see Dimundo (2008). She argues that the lover's promiscuity in Propertius 2.23 suggests a desire to be free from the degradation entailed in his position as *servus amoris*, which is undesirable to a free Roman man (80).

<sup>65</sup> Olson (2008) 91 argues that Roman literary women were valued for qualities outside of their beauty, but to argue this she mistakenly reads the *puella* as the recipient of the advice at Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 2.107-12; this advice is actually given to Ovid's students (in their role of potential lovers), not to the *puellae*. I discuss this particular passage below in reference to the question of male beauty and its importance within elegy.

nor her eyes, those twin torches, my stars,  
nor is it the fact that her breast shines in Arabian silks  
(I am not a lover who flatters for no reason)  
as much as, when she has put aside her wine, she dances beautifully,  
just as Ariadne did as leader for her frenzied chorus,  
and when she starts up a song on her Aeolian lyre,  
talented enough to play something on Aganippe's lyre,  
and when she sets her writing against those of ancient Corinna  
and does not think that the songs of Erinna equal her own.

While acknowledging Cynthia's great beauty and setting it up as something that surpasses that of most women, Propertius claims it is not this feature, but Cynthia's other charms, that truly inspire him.<sup>66</sup> In what seems like an evolution from the circumstances of Propertius 1.1, where Cynthia's eyes were enough to captivate the lover, he now asserts that it is her graceful dancing (*formose saltat*), her musical talent (*temptat carmina plectro* and *ludere docta lyrae*), and her poetic skill (*committit scripta*) that set Cynthia apart and place her in competition not with ordinary women, but with Ariadne (the leader of Bacchic revelers after her marriage to the god), Sappho and the Muses, as well as famed female poets of Greek archaic poetry.<sup>67</sup> The narrator acknowledges her beauty, but the real appeal for him is her talent. The disavowal of the *puella's* physical charms marks the poet as a man concerned with love on a level more elevated than the body.

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<sup>66</sup> The logical inconsistency of this poem, which is at issue here, has been attributed to questionable textual integrity and to Propertius's failure to achieve narrative consistency. Richardson (1977) 218 claims that here Propertius "experiments with thought processes" which results in a "lack of logical neatness, their failure to maintain a constant point of view, their way of building to rushes of intensity only to relapse into the wayward and aimless." Spelman (1999) recognizes the inconsistency, but argues that this contradiction is key to the poetic construction of beauty as separate (as *objet a*) from the *puella*. Miller (1999) 181 considers the same issue for Tibullus' texts, attributing his inconsistency to "a dream-like sequence." I see little problem with such narrative inconsistencies, as thematic concerns often trump narrative consistency in this genre. I do not think the elegist is truly attempting to give a play-by-play account of a relationship.

<sup>67</sup> Richardson (1977) 220. Ariadne's status as leader of Bacchus's maenads is mentioned, and her fame as a dancer is discussed as being one of the marvels displayed on the shield of Achilles, thus making the comparison of Cynthia's talent with that of Ariadne that much more appropriate. Cf. also Propertius 1.3.1-2, where Cynthia is compared to a sleeping Ariadne abandoned by Theseus.

This focus on intellect and skill is unsurprising, as persuasion is the rhetorical strategy of the elegiac lover.<sup>68</sup> James indicates that

...ignorant beauty would render elegy ineffectual, and an easily compliant beloved would render it both pointless and patently ridiculous. The elegiac *puella* must *necessarily* be intelligent and literate in order to understand the poetry directed at her.<sup>69</sup>

Something beyond beauty is required for the persuasive efforts of the poet-lover to be possible or effective. As a product of persuasion—or even education in the case of the *Ars Amatoria*—the elegiac poem must be understood by its internal audience, which most often consists of the *puella*.<sup>70</sup> Her status as *docta* grants further prestige to the status of the poet-lover, as it augments “one’s own poetic prowess” to pursue a *puella* who can appreciate poetry.<sup>71</sup> Further, while James focuses on what this status means for the *puella* and her entourage, I propose to shift our perspective slightly to the poet-lover. Even beyond mere praise for his poetry as an indication of his poetic talent, his status as lover is entangled in her identity as a *docta puella* on an even more practical level: there would be no impoverished lover lamenting his troubles without a *puella* able to appreciate poetry. James further points out that

“The elegiac *docta puella*, as a “literary, sexual, and historical construct” both offers the elegiac poet...a variety of avenues for exploration of both self and other (a female other, in this case) and requires the poet’s eponymous persona, the elegiac lover-poet, to adapt himself to her character and her social circumstances.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> McKeown (1995) for Ovid’s extensive use of rhetoric in the *Amores*. For discussion on the rhetorical techniques of Propertius and on elegy as a genre focused on persuasion, see also James (2003) and Keith (2008) 19-44.

<sup>69</sup> James (2003) 23.

<sup>70</sup> James (2003) 28.

<sup>71</sup> James (2003) 219 states that while the same knowledge would be “useless” to an upper-class Roman woman, it is a “professional advantage” to the *puella*, since it draws “elite, educated lovers.” James frames her education as a necessity for drawing ‘clients.’ My argument shifts focus to consider that it is much more a necessity for the lover’s identity than it is for the fictional *puella*’s profession.

<sup>72</sup> James (2003) 23.

The lover's consistent self-identification as a poor lover in competition with the *dives amator* establishes a scene in which a girl who appreciates poetry is the only way the poet-lover *can* be a lover.<sup>73</sup> His poetry functions as his method of payment. Without this means of exchange, which is wholly dependant upon an appreciative internal audience, the poet-lover would have no potential for success and thus would not be the lover in pursuit of his elusive *puella*. The underlying drive behind the elegiac relationship is hope, not hopelessness and not success. Without some form of payment to set in opposition to the wealth or military glory of his rivals, there would not even be hope for persuasion. The status of the *puella* as *docta* defines the narrator's status as both poet and lover: on the one hand it is a testament to his poetic skill; on the other hand it allows him the identity of impoverished lover.

#### Affirmation of Beauty and the Elegiac Paradigm

Intelligent *puellae* might boost the status of each lover. Beauty, however, remains primary. In this same poem, Propertius goes on to undermine his initial argument of interest in attributes outside of beauty.<sup>74</sup> Although Propertius admires Cynthia for her dancing, it is that she dances with good form (*formose*).

It is a talent, but a talent that is enjoyable because her body is beautiful in its

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<sup>73</sup> On the impoverished poet, see James (2003) 36 who cites Tibullus 1.5, *Amores* 1.3, and *Ars Amatoria* 2.161f.

<sup>74</sup> James (2003) 166. I am in agreement with James on this point. She states that "all this corporeality has led readers to conclude that both Ovid and his eponymous speaker are more interested in the body than in the mind and heart. And indeed the Ovidian lover-poet does speak of loving a *puella*'s body rather than her personality, where the Propertian lover-poet claims, and often seems, to be primarily enamored of Cynthia's character, and the Tibullan lover-poet appears to be in a sometimes agitated dream-state of love having little to do with any woman's appearance. But...this very aspect of Ovid's elegy—its emphasis on carnality, as it were—reveals the same basis in all of elegy. That basis is in male sexual attraction to female beauty, which is both the generating agent of the lover-poet's sexual desire and the physical target of his anger when he realizes that he cannot control the *puella*."

movement. Those talents, which Propertius declares were heavenly gifts of the gods (*caelestia munera divi*) and which have nothing to do with human birth (*non humani partus sunt*), are bypassed in favor of a return to beauty. The poet does not elaborate further upon Cynthia's skills or continue with other extraordinarily talented women as potential models for Cynthia, but instead turns to Helen and her paradigmatic beauty (Propertius 2.3.29-32):

*gloria Romanis una es tu nata puellis;  
Romana accumbes prima puella Iovi.  
nec semper nobiscum humana cubilia vises:  
post Helenam haec terris forma secunda redit.*

You alone are a glory born for Roman girls;  
you will be the first Roman girl to lie with Jupiter.  
You will not always visit human beds with us mere mortals:  
for a second time after Helen this form returns to earth.

So despite the fact that Propertius claims that Cynthia is not just another pretty face, as shown by her talents, her identity is ultimately derived from her physical beauty; she is another Helen *in forma*.<sup>75</sup> Helen is *the* prototype of physical beauty, and Cynthia's connection to her emphasizes this aspect of her character. In this idealization comes the implication that her beauty is the product of poetic craft. It cannot be her talents that will be captured, but her beauty, a beauty that stirs war on a large scale, that burns both the East and West (*uret et Eoos, uret et Hesperios*).<sup>76</sup>

And finally, if we return to the initial rhetorical strategy, the priamel of the poem, we see that, instead of negating, the poet emphasizes these attributes

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<sup>75</sup> A similar, but less elaborate, example of this contrast between the *puella* as object of beauty and *puella* as active subject is presented in Propertius 2.1.

<sup>76</sup> Propertius 2.3.43-44.

James (2003) 182 comes to this conclusion after reading Propertius 2.28.2 through the "prism" of *Amores* 2.13-14. The association of beauty and danger to the *puella* illustrates the same attraction to women based on beauty that she identifies with Ovid. I don't think you need Ovid to come to this conclusion, as I have shown above. Ovid makes explicit what both Propertius and Tibullus do less pointedly, but it may be seen without Ovid.

of her beauty (2.3.9-14). In the alliteration of *candida cepit* (at 2.3.9) and the emphasis on the quality of the *puella*'s complexion in the following lines, Fedeli sees an emphasis on the role of beauty in the pursuit of love,<sup>77</sup> and, in the phrase *non sum de nihilo...amator ego* (at 2.3.14), he reads a final emphasis in the Propertian lover's pride in the *puella*'s beauty.<sup>78</sup> Beauty is not something to be passed over lightly, and, by declaring that it is *not* her face, *not* her hair, *not* her eyes, *not* her breast, Propertius directs the readers' attention to these specific attributes of her beauty. The lover, with this denial, admits that he expects the audience to have attributed his interest to these factors.<sup>79</sup> While it may be important for the lover's own identity that the *puella* be *docta*, this framing of the question with a focus on beauty highlights the key to her identity. It is important for the *puella* to be *docta* for the relationships of elegiac poetry to function properly, but it is not sufficient; she must also be beautiful to be even considered as a *puella*.

In the *Amores*, Ovid similarly claims an interest in his *puella* that lies outside of physical beauty, as he describes his desire as encompassing the entire gamut of what women can offer to their lovers. He not only desires those women who conform to the elegiac paradigm of beauty (the tall and the blonde), but he expands his palette to include even brunettes and petites. Amid this variety in female beauty, Ovid interrupts with a number of less corporeal concerns (Ovid, *Amores* 2.4.17-22):

*sive es docta, places raras dotata per artes;  
sive rudis, placita es simplicitate tua.*

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<sup>77</sup> Fedeli (2005) 129.

<sup>78</sup> Fedeli (2005) 133.

<sup>79</sup> For aesthetic-erotic *comparanda* for *lilia* see Sharrock (1991) 44 on Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.262 and Vergil, *Aeneid* 12.67ff.

*est quae Callimachi prae nostris rustica dicat  
carmina: cui placeo, protinus ipsa placet;  
est etiam quae me vatem et mea carmina culpet:  
culpantis cupiam sustinuisse femur.*

Whether you are learned, you please, endowed with rare techniques;  
or whether you are a simpleton, you are pleasing in your simplicity.  
And there is the girl who declares Callimachus' songs unsophisticated  
compared to mine; she, whom I please, is at once pleasing;  
there is the girl who finds fault with my songs and my role as poet:  
I would desire to hold the thigh of even her having faults.

Here, Ovid assesses the intellect of different *puellae*, indicating that he can appreciate both the learned (*docta*) as well as the simple (*rudis*), the intellectual capable of appreciating his poetry and the girl who finds fault with his poetry or the one too unrefined to even appreciate it.<sup>80</sup> While he lists intelligent girls as potential *puellae*, being *docta* is not a necessity for Ovid—all levels of intelligence are suitable for this poet-lover. The poet continues his all-inclusive list to add varying talents *puellae* may possess (Ovid, *Amores* 2.4.23-32):

*molliter incedit: motu capit; altera dura est:  
at poterit tacto mollior esse viro.  
huic, quia dulce canit flectitque facillima vocem,  
oscula cantanti rapta dedisse velim;  
haec querulas habili percurrit pollice chordas:  
tam doctas quis non possit amare manus?  
illa placet gestu numerosaque brachia ducit  
et tenerum molli torquet ab arte latus:  
ut taceam de me, qui causa tangor ab omni,  
illic Hippolytum pone, Priapus erit.*

Softly this one comes: she seizes with a movement; another is hard:  
but she is able to be softened with the touch of a man.  
To this girl singing, because she sings sweetly and easily modulates  
her voice, I would wish to give stolen kisses;  
another runs over plaintive strings with a practiced thumb:  
who is not able to love such skilled hands?

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<sup>80</sup> McKeown (1998) 66 outlines the catalogue's structure: first, with types of character (11-16), then talents (17-30), and finally physical qualities (33-46). The poet begins with less superficial aspects of the *puella*'s identity to end up ultimately with what fundamentally defines her—physical beauty.



That girl is pleasing in her bearing and rhythmically moves her arms  
and twists her tender side with soft skill:  
I should say no more about me, who am touched by anything,  
put Hippolytus with that one, and he will become Priapus.

Movement is identified as the feature that seizes (23, *capit*) the poet-lover, much like Propertius in 2.3, who is seized (9, *cepit*) by beautiful dancing. The question of attraction is reframed to emphasize the *puella's* talent. As with Propertius, the singer, the musician, and the dancer are all potential *puellae* for Ovid. What differs is that these qualities are represented by multiple *puellae* not a single Cynthia. Further, these talents are not praised as superior to concerns of beauty, but are merely a list of qualities a *puella* could possess. Again, as with her intellect, these talents are not necessary, or even preferred.

Characteristics beyond beauty make a desirable *puella*, but, just as in Propertius 2.3, *Amores* 2.4 similarly concludes with physical beauty. Furthermore, the intellectual and skilled talents of the *puella* receive less attention compared to the more elaborate description of beauty.<sup>81</sup> Again, it is difficult to paint a picture, even a verbal one, of talent. While the elegist in certain instances may expand upon the education, skill, or temperament of the beloved, this attention is limited, and, in the end, the fundamental essence of the beloved is reduced to questions of physical appearance. Neither poet develops the narrative in order to present a descriptive sketch of the *puella's* personality or skill to the same extent as he allows for her physical beauty—such narrative techniques are reserved for descriptions of the *puella's* appearance, not her talents. And significantly her skill is described in as much as it is pleasing to the

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<sup>81</sup> Richlin (1983) 46 elaborates upon the detail granted to three specific categories of attributes (wholly physical and sexual, physical but secondary, her personality), with personality receiving the least amount of attention.

lover and necessary for the erotic context; she's developed as far as is necessary for the lover's admiration and poetry.<sup>82</sup> The physical characteristics are the qualities that ultimately define and limit the *puella's* role within elegy. Her essence is physical beauty.

Although the *puella's* body receives this extensive attention, her physical identity is reduced to a physical ideal; it is generic, not personal. The connection between a woman's identity as *puella* and her beauty is reflected by a "highly conventionalized" paradigm of physical attributes that may be defined from poetic constructions across genre: captivating eyes, a clear complexion (*candor*), rosy cheeks, blonde hair, white neck, small feet, soft arms, etc.<sup>83</sup> The poet employs a limited set of terms to denote specific physical attributes: the nouns *candor*, *rubor*, and *color*, and the adjectives *formosus*, *candidus*, *niveus*, *nitens*, *roseus*, *purpureus*, *mollis*, and *tenuis* to name but a few of the most common.<sup>84</sup> Physical beauty, specifically one with such a fixed inventory, is so intrinsic to the identity of the elegiac *puella* that it becomes generic, a list of attributes that can be

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<sup>82</sup> This analysis is not meant to indicate that the elegist's *puella* is completely undeveloped or one-dimensional. The reader glimpses the character of Cynthia little by little through narrative windows into the relationship between *puella* and lover. In these poems, Cynthia does appear to have agency, although her actions consist primarily of having affairs with other rivals or denying the lover access. The reader rarely sees her outside the context of love (with the exception, perhaps, of religious observances, which the poet-lover later considers more an excuse to deny him sex than true religious devotion, cf. Propertius 4.5.34, Tibullus 1.3.23-26, Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.74)

<sup>83</sup> Wyke (2002) 151-153 discusses the construction of the elegiac *puella* as an assembly "from a repertoire of archetypal features for the female beauties of fiction," as she argues against the biological fallacy of attempting to assign the identity of Cynthia to a particular Augustan woman. Cf. also, Keith (1994) 27-40 and Richlin (1983) 45-47 for parts praised as part of the *puella's* beauty. Although both epic and elegy work within the same paradigm of ideal female beauty, Richlin discusses the contrasting significance of beauty in epic versus elegy. For the heroines of epic, beauty "is generally part of their heroic, quasi-divine status," and they are not really objectified; contrarily, the elegiac *puellae* serve as "objects of desire."

<sup>84</sup> Laigneau (1999) 39-40 claims that *rubor* indicates 'shame' unless qualified by another positive term, such as *roseus* (in Ovid, *Amores* 3.3.5-6). For discussion on the shades of meaning between the terms marking the *puella's* complexion, see Laigneau (1999) 48-52. She argues that the brilliance of complexion denotes not only the quality of the external appearance, but that of the internal character as well, but gives no textual evidence to support this claim. Sharrock (1991) 45 characterizes *formosa* as being "almost a *vox propria* of beloveds." These studies demonstrate the care with which the elegists employ conventional language in their description of the *puella*.

ascribed to any *puella*. The possession of one aspect of this collection of attributes can, in most cases, be considered a poetic abbreviation indicating the presence of the rest as well. While used in other genres, these terms are used in elegy to mark out a specific corporeal discourse for the elegiac *puella*. This paradigm is that against which the poet-lover may define himself. He may have effeminate tendencies in his dependency upon the *puella* or his lack of interest in public affairs, but he does not slip so far as to take on completely feminine qualities. The *puella* represents what the lover is not, and yet, at other times, she is a reflection of what he is—only an eroticized version of that. Her beauty can serve as both a reflection and an inversion of the lover's identity, demonstrating the fluidity of his own status.

### Beauty and the Male Beloved

The beauty of the male beloved (*puer* or *iuuenis*) may be described using the same set of conventional terms as those applied to the *puella*'s beauty.<sup>85</sup> Biological sex does not create a set of shared physical characteristics between the male beloved and elegiac lover, but instead, within elegiac discourse, the role of being a beloved to some degree overshadows the *iuuenis*' identity as a male.<sup>86</sup> Irrespective of shared biological sex, the body of the elegiac young man represents an "Other" for the elegist.<sup>87</sup> The *iuuenis*' body, as well as that of the *puella*, serves a different function in rendering elegiac identity than that of the

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<sup>85</sup> For the male beloved as representing poetic qualities, see Fredrick (1997) 174-176 on Callimachus' use of this trope with the *pais*. This comparison makes sense, considering a similar body of vocabulary is used for both *puella* and the male beloved.

<sup>86</sup> Elegy does not mention actual sexual relationships with *pueri/iuuenes*, but for discussion on pederastic relationships see Richlin (1993) 533-539.

<sup>87</sup> Beauvoir (1989) xxii trans. H. M. Parshley. Beauvoir argues that women have been consistently defined as "the Other", whereas the male sex has been defined as "the One," making women the "incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential."

poet-lover.<sup>88</sup> This said, however, the treatment of the two beloveds is not strictly the same. While the terms of characterization of the two beloveds' bodies might be the same, the other aspects of their physical description are not. For one thing, the body of the male beloved is not exposed to a fetishizing *ekphrasis* in the way that the *puella's* is. And, secondly, the body of the *iuvenis* is placed in context with traditionally masculine activities. Both factors demonstrate a level of distance from the body not seen with the *puella*, thus complicating the characterization of his body and elegiac identity.<sup>89</sup>

Tibullus is the only surviving elegist to refer to a relationship with a *iuvenis* in his poetry,<sup>90</sup> but both Ovid and Propertius render the bodies of youths in the same erotically charged language as that of the *puella*.<sup>91</sup> Through this connection, each indicates that the aesthetic values of these same-sex relationships are not unrelated to their own paradigm of beauty.<sup>92</sup> This aesthetic is reflected in Propertius' advice to Gallus,<sup>93</sup> his friend and amatory peer, about

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<sup>88</sup> Beauvoir (1989) xxiii. "Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself."

<sup>89</sup> Richlin (1983) 34-44. The elegiac characterization of *pueri/iuvenes* is in direct contrast to that of epigrams from the late Republic or early Empire, in which "the boys are generally pictured as lovely and idle, viewed at play...never viewed as potential adults who will become freedmen, carry on business and government, have children, or grow old."

<sup>90</sup> Tibullus 1.4, 1.8 and implied in 1.9. See Catullus, Horace, and Virgil's *Eclogue* 10 for other instances of male beloveds.

<sup>91</sup> While Catullus also writes of a male beloved (in 15, 21, 24, 48, 81, and 99), he focuses primarily on the presence of a rival for the *puer's* affections. *Mollis* (in 99 to describe Juventius' knuckles) is a shared term between Catullus and the elegists, but elsewhere the terminology differs, including *mellitus* (to describe his eyes in 48 and Juventius generally in 99), as well the adjective *dulcis* (to describe his kiss in 99).

Horace's *puer delicatus*, Ligurinus, is described in comparable terms to the elegiac *puer/iuvenis* in *Carmina* 4.10, with concern for the youth's *facies*, *coma*, *color*, and *rosae genae*, which will all fade with old age. Ligurinus is also described with the phrase *Veneris muneribus potens*, which refers to his body and is reminiscent of the *puella's forma potens*. Lycidas in *Carmina* 1.4 is described as *tenerus*. For discussion of eroticism in Horace, see Ancona (1994).

<sup>92</sup> Male beloveds are mentioned as possibilities in Propertius 2.4.17-22, Ovid *Amores* 1.1.20 and 2.1.5-6 (his ideal audience is both *virgo* and *puer*).

<sup>93</sup> The identity of Gallus in the *Monobiblos* will not figure as an important issue in my dissertation. Many have attempted to connect this Gallus with the elegiac poet Cornelius Gallus; most now see multiple Galluses in play in this book, as they separate the Gallus of 1.21 from the poet. Throughout his chapter noting allusion to the poet Gallus in Propertius' *Monobiblos*, Ross

his relationship to his beloved. To illustrate the potential for loss, the poet-lover presents the story of Hylas and Hercules as an *exemplum* for why Gallus should keep careful watch on his own male beloved. In approaching Propertius 1.20, many have read the figure of Hylas metapoetically, in order to uncover allusions to Gallus' poetry and more directly identify this particular Gallus as the elegiac poet of that name.<sup>94</sup> My own interest in the poem lies in demonstrating his liminality within the narrative, and interest that mostly concerns the narrative proper.

Propertius indicates that Gallus' beloved is in danger of being claimed by another, just as several potential lovers (both the sons of Aquilonia and the Dryades) attempted to woo Hylas. Not only the narrative circumstances, but the erotic description of Hylas in this poem is intended to be a reflection of the physical qualities attributed to Gallus' lover. The effeminacy of both male beloveds is emphasized through the physical models and erotic aesthetic set out in Propertius' poem. The mythological background suggests a strong tie to effeminacy, as noted by Kenneth Mauerohofer, who has argued that the figure of Hylas is a synthesis of various mythological heroines, such as Persephone and

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(1975) argues that most instances where Gallus occurs are indeed the poet, but he makes an exception for 1.21 and 4.1 of the last book (82-84). More recently, Janan (2001) 33-52 has argued that the Gallus poems resist a "coherent" reading of 'Gallus' purposely in order to confuse the question of identity and demonstrate the problematic subjectivity of the male in this period. According to Janan (2001) 33-52, the Gallus poems resist a "coherent" reading of 'Gallus' purposely to confuse the question of identity and demonstrate the problematic subjectivity of the male in this period. For a brief discussion of this debate and extensive bibliography, see Pincus (2004) 168-172.

<sup>94</sup> Petrain (2000) discusses Propertius 1.20 as the presentation of two discourses that can be read simultaneously: one on the narrative level, in which the narrator advises Gallus to watch over his beloved, and one on the metapoetic level, where Hylas is related to the literary use of the term *silva*, which indicates "subject-matter." He argues that the metapoetic reading "has important ramifications for how we should understand Propertius' warnings to Gallus" (414). Curran (1964) uncovers the connection of Hylas to nature through a metapoetic reading. Bramble (1974) 87 sees the poem as a poetic conversation between Propertius and Gallus. Mauerohofer (2004) 138 does not see a necessary connection to the poet Gallus. Claiming that intertext alone cannot decide the issue, because many of the words lack poetic intent, he argues against Petrain's intertextual reading.

Europa.<sup>95</sup> In addition to the similar experiences of these heroines and Hylas, the specific formulation of his beauty reflects the idealization of his figure, as his body, in much the same way that Cynthia of 3.24.5 (*mixtam varia figura*), is a combination of various idealized women.<sup>96</sup> This mythological allusion secures the status of the *iuvenis* as an erotic object.

In addition to these mythological models, Propertius specifically connects the beloved's physicality to that of the elegiac *puella* through images of nature. Hylas is described with the term *formosus*,<sup>97</sup> once directly in the last lines of the poem (*formosum ni vis perdere rursus Hylan*),<sup>98</sup> and again, indirectly, as he sits at the waters admiring his own image (Propertius 1.20.39-42):

*quae modo decerpens tenero pueriliter ungui  
proposito florem praetulit officio;  
et modo formosis incumbens nescius undis  
errorem blandis tardat imaginibus.*

Which blossom now boyishly plucking with a graceful nail  
he places foremost, with his duty put aside;  
and now unknowing leaning over the beautiful waters  
he prolongs his wandering because of his flattering reflections.

While the adjective here, beautiful (*formosis*), is directly modifying the waters (*undis*), the narrative circumstances of the passage indicate that the adjective is transferred to Hylas himself through focalization and should be associated with

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<sup>95</sup> Mauerhofer (2004) 131.

<sup>96</sup> Mauerhofer (2004) 131-132.

<sup>97</sup> See *Ars Amatoria* 3.251-258 above for use of *formosus* for *puellae*. For other uses of *formosus* for male beloveds, see Propertius 1.20.54 in reference to Hylas *formosum nymphis credere rursus Hylan* and in Propertius 2.13.55 in reference to Adonis. While the latter poem draws a parallel between *puella*-Propertius and Venus-Adonis, the poem does not eroticize the body of the poet in this context. While Adonis's beauty is admired at the point of his death, the lover emphasizes mere bones when he talks of his own death. The contrast highlights the very fact that the poet-lover does not engage in direct erotic description of himself.

<sup>98</sup> Propertius 1.20.54.

the *iuvenis*.<sup>99</sup> Because Hylas is looking at the reflective surface of the waters, it is not the waters that actually attract attention themselves, but it is the *imagines* (reflections) of his own image—his own beauty—that catch Hylas’ eye.<sup>100</sup> The association of Hylas’ identity to this adjective, *formosus*, marks him as an erotic object. Hylas’ identity is further connected to that of the *puella* when he is dragged under the waters by the nymphs (Propertius 1.20.45-48):

*cuius ut accensae Dryades candore puellae,  
miratae solitos destituere choros,  
prolapsum et leviter facili traxere liquore;  
tum sonitum rapto corpore fecit Hylas.*

When the Dryads, girls burned by his beauty,  
in wonder left off from their accustomed dances,  
and dragged under his body lightly slipping in the smooth water;  
then Hylas made a sound, as his body was snatched.

Just as Cynthia’s beauty is described in terms of her *candor* in Propertius 3.24.8, the poet uses this term to characterize the beauty of Hylas. The placement of *candor* next to *puellae* reiterates this conventional connection, and, although the noun *candor* refers to Hylas directly, its proximity to the term *puella* marks Hylas’ beauty as appropriate to an elegiac beloved. Further, if one considers the allusions to the *locus amoenus* of 1.20.33-38 in the Hylas story, the *iuvenis*’ body can be tied even more securely to that of the *puella*. Mauerhofer indicates that the scenery of these lines erotically colors the body of the *iuvenis*.<sup>101</sup> As he gathers the blooms of the white lilies and red poppies (*lilia...candida purpureis mixta papaveribus*, 1.20.37-38), the figure of Hylas embodies the connotations behind

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<sup>99</sup> The use of *formosus*, literally implying the form of an object, is also significant here, as water would have no form itself.

<sup>100</sup> Fedeli (1980) 478-479 connects this image to that of Narcissus in *Metamorphoses* 3.

<sup>101</sup> Mauerhofer (2004) 127-128 and fn. 27.

these flowers, as they both reflect his identity as *iuvenis* and foretell his fate.<sup>102</sup>

Propertius does not directly eroticize the body of Hylas, but instead employs an erotically charged setting to secure his effeminate status.

While the body of Hylas is certainly effeminized, the action of the episode problematizes this corporeal effeminacy. Williams reads this episode as a reflection of the liminal status of the beautiful *iuvenis*, “who might attract admirers of either sex.”<sup>103</sup> For Williams, the key to identity is the beauty, not the potential for homosexual action. Contrarily, Mauerhofer (2004) reads the death of Hylas at the hands of the Dryades not only as a death, but a sexual coming of age (*Geburt des Mannes*).<sup>104</sup> And, in his warning, Propertius specifically marks the contemporary ‘nymphs’ (*Nympharum*, 1.20.11) of Rome as the danger, when he states that their love is not less than that of the analogous to the Dryades who eventually pull Hylas into their world, an emphasis indicating that Hylas may make the transition from male beloved to adult male. In the end, Hylas status is ambiguous, as he swings back and forth between possible male and female lovers.

A similar rendering of the male beloved’s body in erotic terms and the ultimate problematization of his masculine status can be seen more fully applied in the context of Tibullus’ pederastic poems. Themes similar to those in ‘heterosexual’ elegiac poems do surface, as in Tibullus 1.4: the boy rejects or demonstrates reluctance toward the lover, the lover condemns the greed of the beloved, the consequences of old age are warned of, and the boy’s physical

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<sup>102</sup> Mauerhofer (2004) 127 fn. 27 associates the whiteness of the lilies to tenderness (*Zartheit*), purity (*Reinheit*), and brevity (*Kurzlebigkeit*), while the rouge of the poppy has connotations of both eroticism (*Erotik*) and death (*Schlaf und Tod*).

<sup>103</sup> Williams (2010) 64.

<sup>104</sup> Mauerhofer (2004) 137.



appearance is described. With these shared themes comes a shared description of the beloved, as the poet-lover Tibullus seeks amatory advice from the god, Priapus<sup>105</sup> (Tibullus 1.4.1-6):

*sic umbrosa tibi contingant tecta, Priape,  
ne capiti soles, ne noceantque nives:  
quae tua formosos cepit sollertia? certe  
non tibi barba nitet, non tibi culta coma est;  
nudus et hibernae producis frigora brumae,  
nudus et aestivi tempora sicca Canis.*

Priapus, thus may shady coverings befall you,  
and may neither the suns, nor the snows, harm your head:  
what cleverness of yours captures beautiful boys? Certainly  
your beard is not sleek, nor is your hair well-groomed;  
naked, you endure both the cold of frosty winter  
and the parched times of the summer Dog-star.

It is not women whom Tibullus wants to capture, but the *formosi* (handsome boys).<sup>106</sup> The beauty of these young men is emphasized not only by the specific adjective used, but their attractiveness is set in direct contrast to the appearance of Priapus, who is described as if he were merely ordinary or even disheveled due to his untended beard (*non nitet* and *non culta*).<sup>107</sup> The contrast of the positive attribute *formosus* with the repeated denials of *non culta* and *non nitet* sets up a clear opposition of aesthetic values, in which one pole, that of young men, represents beauty with all of its necessary attention, and the other, that of the active male lover, represents appearance that is not tended. This opposition, along with the repetition of *non* in reference to Priapus' appearance, creates a spectrum of beauty in which Priapus serves as the negative term and the boys

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<sup>105</sup> See Maltby (2002) 216 for instances in Hellenistic poetry where Priapus acts as *praeceptor amoris*.

<sup>106</sup> For a metapoetic reading of the *pueri* in this poem, see Nikoloutsos (2007).

<sup>107</sup> The contrast can be taken even further if Priapus is considered to be ugly, as he is in *Priapea* 39.

represent the positive; both factors highlight the fact that Tibullus' amatory target is beautiful.

Later in this same poem, the beauty of the *formosi*, while characterized through the same set of terms as the elegiac *puella*, is indirectly implied through an application of these erotic terms to nature rather than the physical body of the boys (Tibullus 1.4.27-36):

*at si tardus eris errabis. transilit aetas  
quam cito! non segnis stat remeatque dies.  
quam cito purpureos deperdit terra colores,  
quam cito formosas populus alta comas.  
quam iacet, infirmae venere ubi fata senectae,  
qui prior Eleo est carcere missus equus.  
vidi iam iuvenem, premeret cum senior aetas,  
maerentem stultos praeteriisse dies.  
crudeles divi! serpens novus exuit annos:  
formae non ullam fata dedere moram.*

But if you delay, you are in error. How fast  
age flits by! The day does not stand idle and it does not return.  
How quickly the earth loses its shining colors (of youth),  
how quickly the great poplar lets fall its beautiful leaves.  
How still the horse lies, when the fate of old age come upon him,  
which once ran forth from the Elian stall.  
I have seen a youth, when late age presses upon him,  
grieving that he had passed his days foolishly.  
Cruel gods! A snake emerges anew as he sheds his years:  
the fates give no reprieve to form.

The same attributes that are characteristic of the beauty of the *puella*, complexion and hair, are here applied to features of the natural world.<sup>108</sup> As may be seen elsewhere in Tibullus' poetry, where the poet replaces *ekphrases* of the *puella*'s body with that of landscape,<sup>109</sup> the analogy of nature's beauty stands in for the expected description of body of the young men. The earth's hue and the poplar's

<sup>108</sup> See fn. 45 and 83 above on the eroticized features of the *puella*. Cf. Propertius 2.3.13, for use of *coma* as another element of beauty, but pointedly it is not in Tibullus 1.4 for Priapus.

<sup>109</sup> Fredrick (1997) 186 compares Tibullus' description of landscape as a replacement of the description of the *puella* in his elegy.

leaves serve as substitutes for the boys' blush of youth or well-formed hair.<sup>110</sup>

Although the bodies of the young men are spared from the objectifying detailed *ekphrasis* to which the *puella*'s body is subject, the identity of the young men is intricately intertwined with the elegiac paradigm of beauty and the visibility of their body. Once again, the forces of nature are employed as a means of erotically coloring the male beloved.

### Complicating the male beloved's body

Much as with the *puella*, the *iuvenis*' characterization is complicated by factors beyond beauty, and, as in the case of Propertius and Ovid, the lover's interest in boys originates from more than physical appearance. The male beloved requires an additional dimension of meaning to serve as elegiac *iuvenis*. Priapus makes this clear as he describes the various reasons that one may find a young man attractive (Tibullus 1.4.9-14):

*o fuge te tenerae puerorum credere turbae:  
nam causam iusti semper amoris habent.  
hic placet, angustis quod equum compescit habenis;  
hic placidam niveo pectore pellit aquam;  
hic, quia fortis adest audacia, cepit: at illi  
virgineus teneras stat pudor ante genas.*

Refuse to entrust yourself to the tender crowd of boys:  
for they always have a cause of just love.  
One is pleasing, because he holds back his horse with thin reins;  
another drives away the calm water with his snow-white chest;  
another captivates you, because he has a courageous boldness: but  
that one displays maidenly shame upon his tender cheeks.

It is not the case that all boys (*pueri*) are admired merely for the sake of their physical appearance. Engaging in activities such as horsemanship and

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<sup>110</sup> Commenting on Catullus 64.90, Clarke (2003) 71 notes that the "colours of the earth were commonly associated with reds and purples" and that these colors "heighten the erotic overtones" of such passages.

swimming, as well as possessing the personality traits of boldness and modesty, are qualities that make a boy attractive to the lover. These activities lessen the significance of physical beauty for the young men at the same time as they make these youths more visually accessible, and thus open to potential objectification. On the one hand, these activities place the youth in the public eye, and, therefore, make him subject to critique from a spectator. These activities, however, fall within the expected occupations of an elite young man, and this level of visibility is not unusual for an elite youth. On the other hand, elegy renders these same activities in a way suggesting concern for physical beauty, both through their connection to erotically charged descriptions of the youths' beauty (with specific reference to *niveo pectore* and *teneras genas*), as well as proximity to the terms *tenerae*, *angustis*, *virgineus*, and *pudor*.<sup>111</sup> This close association of the corporeal with the male beloved's talent may even exceed that noted earlier in the case of Cynthia's dancing, lyre playing, and poetic composition; in the end, what matters about these activities is how the boy looks while engaging in them.<sup>112</sup> The *iuvenis*' status here is unstable at best, as the poet renders appropriate male activity in erotic terms.

This objectification of the young man is highlighted by the later expansion of activities, which the lover may perform alongside his beloved (Tibullus 1.4.39-52):

*tu, puero quodcumque tuo temptare libebit,  
cedas: obsequio plurima vincet amor.  
neu comes ire neges, quamvis via longa paretur*

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<sup>111</sup> *Niveus* is also used of Adonis in Propertius 2.13.53.

<sup>112</sup> Sharrock (1991) 40 characterizes the terms *eburneus*, *nudus*, and *niveus* as "erotic-aesthetic epithets" in connection with Cynthia and other elegiac *puellae*, using evidence from Propertius 2.1.9, Tibullus 1.5.6, and Ovid *Amores* 2.4.41, 2.16.29, 3.2.42, 3.3.66, 3.7.7. For these color terms, also see Clarke (2003) and Laigneau (1999) 42.

*et Canis arenti torreat arva siti,  
 quamvis praetexens picta ferrugine caelum  
 †venturam amiciat imbrifer arcus aquam†.  
 vel si caeruleas puppi volet ire per undas,  
 ipse levem remo per freta pelle ratem.  
 nec te paeniteat duros subiisse labores  
 aut opera insuetas atteruisse manus;  
 nec, velit insidiis altas si claudere valles,  
 dum placeas, umeri retia ferre negent.  
 si volet arma, levi temptabis ludere dextra;  
 saepe dabis nudum, vincat ut ille, latus.*

Go ahead and yield to whatever it is pleasing for your boy to try:  
 love will conquer most effectively with obedience.  
 And don't refuse to go along as a companion, though a long road is prepared  
 and the Dog-star burns the field with parched drought,  
 although the rainbearing arc covers over the oncoming rain  
 fringing the sky with painted rusty-red hue.  
 Or if he wants to go through the sky-blue waves,  
 propel the unsound raft yourself through the depths with an oar.  
 And don't let it offend you to undergo hard labors  
 or to wear away your hands unaccustomed to work;  
 and, if he wishes to enclose the deep valleys with traps,  
 don't let your shoulders refuse to carry the nets, so long as you are  
 pleasing.  
 If he wants to practice at arms, you will try to play with a light hand;  
 often you will leave your side unguarded, so that he may win.

Tibullus here broadens the beloved's activities to include activities such as travel,  
 sailing, hard work, hunting, and arms training.<sup>113</sup> These activities, along with the  
 horsemanship and swimming mentioned earlier in the poem, are all also  
 appropriate for aristocratic Roman boys.<sup>114</sup> In this additional set of activities,  
 however, Tibullus places a different emphasis on the body than was seen in the  
 previous set. These activities are not emphasized as being open to the gaze of an  
 audience, as the description of the bodies involved is more limited. Tibullus

<sup>113</sup> Putnam (1973) 93 associates the *via longa* here with that in Tibullus 1.1.26, which connotes a military life.

<sup>114</sup> Williams (2010) 207-208 points out that these activities are traditional exercises of aristocratic young Romans, as is travel (Tibullus 1.4.41-46) and hunting or fencing (Tibullus 1.4.49-52). The status of the *pueri* is made ambiguous by these activities and the application of a Greek name to Marathus in the later pederastic poems of Tibullus.

instead emphasizes the difficulty and exertion (*nec te paeniteat duros subiisse labores* and *opera insuetas atteruisse manus*) involved in these tasks. While there are some indications of the lover's softness, as hinted at by his inexperience with manual labor (due to his *opera insuetas...manus*), and a hint of eroticization of his body (with *nudum latus* and reference to *Canis siti*), the focus is much less on the physical attractiveness or erotic potential of the lover's body than when the activity emphasized performances of the young man. When the boy is on display to the lover, and not engaging in activities alongside him, Tibullus utilizes erotically charged language to underscore the boy's erotic potential, by describing his activities in bodily terms and how he looks as he performs them. When the lover is actively present in the narrative, however, his presence, as active male lover, pulls the terminology from the erotic into that which is more suitable for appropriate male activity.

This poetic manner of displaying the bodies of youths is not surprising in consideration of the public spectacle surrounding an elite boy's transition to manhood. Whether in reference to participation in the Troy games<sup>115</sup> or to the taking of the *toga virilis*, display of the young male body in these contexts emphasizes the adolescent status of the boys or their transition from that status to adulthood.<sup>116</sup> The liminality of these bodies is subjected to an audience, demonstrating both the vulnerability of the young male and his masculinity. In the case of the male coming into manhood, the *bullae* are meant to ward off the evil eye and serve as a protection for the boys before reaching adulthood, while the protection from the gaze offered by the *bullae* is no longer needed once one

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.545-579.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Persius 5.30, which describes the rite in which the Roman boys "put off" both the *toga praetexta* and the *bullae*. The ceremony took place in the Forum of Augustus.

becomes a man and takes up the *toga virilis*.<sup>117</sup> The *iuvenis* is objectified in the act of performing the rites of passage that, once completed, will segregate him from those upon whom a gaze such as that of the elegiac lover may be fixed. It is this liminal state that captivates the poet-lover, who has no interest in a male child lacking the marks of imminent manhood or in an adult male. Within the elegiac world, the *iuvenis* or *puer* is eroticized and described in terms of physical attractiveness, although he still inhabits a world framed by traditional Roman ideas of masculinity.<sup>118</sup> These traditional ways of demonstrating masculinity are effeminized, however, as these bodies fall subject to erotic treatment.

Such display is, however, not extended to the adult male body in such an explicit way. The *praeceptor* (in this case Priapus) does not turn an eroticizing gaze upon the lover's body, despite the fact that the (at least, biologically) male body seems fair game. The adult lover is not subject to the same objectification as the *puer*. The contrast between these two passages above demonstrates hesitation on the part of Tibullus to define the male lover with this same erotic discourse used in his description of the *iuvenis*. The adult male body is not a source of pleasure for the lover, and so he cannot be objectified in a way that the youth might be. As has been shown in the discussion above, however, whether the poet is describing a *puella* or a *puer*, physical appearance and its evaluation by the lover are primary concerns in creating the identity of an appropriate beloved. One does not read of a beloved without some positive physical description,

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<sup>117</sup> Sebesta (2001) 46-47 states that "the conjunction of the *toga praetexta* with the *bullae* indicates that the *praetexta* band was in origin apotropaic, a protective border worn during sexual immaturity, when the child was most defenseless against evil." Also see Richlin (1993) 545-548.

<sup>118</sup> Elegy does not function within a world completely literary and isolated from the material world. See James (2003) 6 and Kennedy (1993), especially 91-100, for some discussion of this. On elegiac discourse engaging with public discourse, see Greene (1998) 41. For the counterargument, see Veyne (1983).

although the *iuvenis*' elegiac role and relationship to his body is more complex than that of the *puella*.

### The Lover's Appearance as Confirmation of Masculinity

In the elegiac world punctuated by descriptions of beautiful forms or bodies in action, the question remains as to whether similar concerns of beauty hold for the lover himself. Given elegy's emphasis on the inverted gender roles of an empowered *puella* and a submissive poet-lover, one might expect to see the lover's body mirror the effeminacy of the form of the *iuvenis*. It is not through the category of beauty, however, that the lover's body will be problematized. Despite the poet-lover's tendency toward weakness and the occasional application of the terminology of *mollitia* to his body, all three elegists maintain separate aesthetic paradigms for the beloveds and the lovers.<sup>119</sup> The same set of erotic terminology applied to the beloveds' bodies is rarely applied to adult male bodies, much less to that of the elegiac lover himself.<sup>120</sup> In his advice to Phloe on how she should handle her lover, Marathus, Tibullus establishes a different set of values for the beloved male and the adult male (Tibullus 1.8.29-32):

*munera ne poscas: det munera canus amator,  
ut foveat molli frigida membra sinu.*

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<sup>119</sup> In Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.130 two types of beauty are defined: one for a woman and one for a man (*cum autem pulchritudinis duo genera sint, quorum in altero venustas sit, in altero dignitas, venustatem muliebrem ducere debemus, dignitatem virilem.*). The elegists similarly operate with distinct paradigms of physical appearance for beloved and lover.

<sup>120</sup> Most exceptions to this statement are for gods, who are not subject to the same guidelines as the elegiac lover and his peers. For the exceptions for a few of the most common erotic adjectives or nouns derived from these adjectives:

The term *formosus* is applied to the soldier in Propertius 4.4, Apollo in Tibullus 2.3 and [Tibullus 3.4], Apollo and Bacchus in *Amores* 1.14, and to Jason and Paris in *Heroides* 12 and 13.

The term *candidus* is applied to Amor in Propertius 2.3, Bacchus in Propertius 3.17 and Liber in [Tibullus 3.6], Ovid giving thanks for Corinna's survival in *Amores* 2.13, Cerinthus in [Tibullus 3.9]. The noun *candor* is tied to Apollo in [Tibullus 3.4].

*Niveus* applied to Apollo in [Tibullus 3.4].

*Purpureus* to Apollo in [Tibullus 3.4], to Amor in *Amores* 2.1, 2.9, and *Ars Amatoria* 1.232.



*carior est auro iuvenis, cui levia fulgent  
ora nec amplexus aspera barba terit.*

You should not demand gifts: let the grey-haired lover give gifts,  
so that he may warm his cold limbs with your soft bosom.  
More dear than gold is a young man, whose smooth face shines  
and rough beard does not abrade his embraces.

The division between *iuvenis* and *amator* is clearly marked in the advice of the poet-lover: the *iuvenis* is to be admired for his physical attributes, the older lover for his gifts. This advice, given to a *puella*, does not change the potential of Marathus to serve as a male beloved. It is Marathus' status as *iuvenis* that allows him to be described in corporeal terms similar to those used throughout the poetry dealing with male beloveds. It is not appropriate to describe the youth's identity as a truly masculine lover devoid of physical beauty, because his status has already been compromised by his age.<sup>121</sup> Tibullus narrates the poem, and, as such, he is in the position to appreciate and allow for beauty in this young man whom he admires as a potential beloved for himself.<sup>122</sup> While the *iuvenis* is engaging in a heterosexual act with a *puella*, he is associated with an effeminizing beauty. And so, while the lover embraces a degree of effeminacy in his interaction with the *puella*, he avoids it in the context of physical beauty.

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<sup>121</sup> Williams (2010) 19-29 and 59-64 states that the type of male partner who is usually considered suitable for sexual interest of men is the youth. These youths—though often compared to Hylas, Hyacinth, and Ganymede—were not completely relegated to same-sex relations, but were seen as likely partners for both men and women.

<sup>122</sup> See Tibullus 1.4.33 and 1.8.31 for further instances where *iuvenis* is used to indicate a boy young enough to be of interest to Tibullus. Also for the *iuvenis* Argynnus and his relationship with Agamemnon in Propertius 3.7.21-24, see Richardson (1977) 343 for an explanation of the details of the story. Richardson mistakenly states that this story of Argynnus' death "has, of course, nothing to do with the case of Paetus." It is quite an appropriate comparison, actually, as the death of Paetus in this poem is eroticized, with mention of *teneras manus* (48) and mention of *ungues* (51) and *longas comas* (60). Richardson's text reads *longas manus*, to which he compares the long hands of Cynthia as one of her "points of beauty" in 2.2.5. Richardson discounts any erotic connotation, but, whether it is *longas comas* or *longas manus*, the poetic description of his body is described with terms appropriate to an erotic context. Cf. Ovid, *Amores*, 1.1.20. *aut puer aut longas compta puella comas*.

Even with the changes in narration and focalization that occur within elegiac narrative, the lover's body is consistently treated with terms outside of those marking beauty. One needs only to look at Ovid's advice to his student-lovers in the *Ars Amatoria*, which effectively serves as a self-help guide on most aspects of being an elegiac lover, to see that possessing a beautiful body is not required or even encouraged for elegiac lovers. Ovid's unique narrative perspective in this work, as *praeceptor amoris*, provides insight into the problem of the lover's beauty and how it fits into the definition of his identity. As an instructor for potential lovers, he designates how a lover should act, and most important for this chapter, what he should look like. In his first and second books, Ovid provides advice in direct opposition to that given to the prospective *puellae* about tending their bodies in the third book. The lover's beauty is not to be actively cultivated or emphasized (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.143-144):

*ergo age, fallaci timide confide figurae,  
quisquis es, aut aliquid corpore pluris habe.*

So go on, trust your deceitful appearance with caution,  
whoever you are, or have something of more worth than the body.

In this pointed instruction, Ovid, as *praeceptor amoris*, rejects the notion that the body and its appearance have any lasting relevance or benefit for his students striving to become lovers (as well as for "himself" acting as the lover within the *Amores*).<sup>123</sup> In fact, the body may cause harm, as it is characterized as deceitful (*fallax*) and as something of lesser value than what the lover needs for seduction (*aliquid corpore pluris*). This statement inverts the value of physical beauty that has been established above in regard to the two beloveds, where the body and its

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<sup>123</sup> Janka (1997) 142 notes that rich lovers at least have money in addition to their beauty.

physical beauty serve as the primary routes by which the poet-lover creates the elegiac identities of both *puella* and *iuvenis*. While the beloved is dependent on beauty for definition of his or her identity in the elegiac world, the lover would be foolish to similarly rely on beauty alone to fill his role as lover. Unlike the *puella* or *iuvenis*, the lover has a choice when it comes to creating his identity, and his position as lover requires something more.

On first glance, Ovid's advice appears to be reflected in the narratives of the three elegists, as the vast majority of references to physical beauty throughout the elegiac *corpus* refer to a beloved. Inner turmoil and pain are laid out clearly, but, excepting those qualities that reflect psychological distress, overt physical description of the lover is minimal outside of the instruction provided in the *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>124</sup> Even vague reference to his physical appearance is lacking.<sup>125</sup> This pattern is explicitly broken by Ovid, as he provides clear instruction to his potential students on what they should concern themselves with in regards to their appearance. His advice reveals that the elegiac poet is not completely indifferent to the appearance of the lover; in fact, this aspect of his character is so significant that the students receive careful guidelines for how they should look (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.505-512):

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<sup>124</sup> The topic of lovesickness and infirmity will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. This statement refers to all other potential characterization of the lover.

<sup>125</sup> Griffith (1985) 309. This lack of physical description of the antagonist is reminiscent of what he points out for the *Aeneid*, in which the physical appearance of adult male heroes—such as Aeneas and Turnus—is generally not described in any great detail, although the appearance of the young men does receive more attention (313). Griffith points out that “after twelve books of the *Aeneid*, from which we have gained quite an intimate knowledge of Aeneas' inner feelings, his loyalties, anxieties, loves, and rages, we remain unsure of his physical deportment, the expressions on his face, his gestures and habits.” While there is no specific description of Aeneas' appearance, there is general reference to his appearance; in his comparison to a god, Aeneas' face, shoulders, hair, eyes, and youthful appearance are mentioned (318). Aeneas appears as a blank canvas on which the reader may paint his own picture of the hero (319).

*sed tibi nec ferro placeat torquere capillos,  
nec tua mordaci pumice crura teras.  
ista iube faciant, quorum Cybeleia mater  
concinitur Phrygiis exululata modis.  
forma viros neglecta decet; Minoida Theseus  
abstulit, a nulla tempora comptus acu;  
Hippolytum Phaedra, nec erat bene cultus, amavit;  
cura deae silvis aptus Adonis erat.*

But let it not be pleasing for you to curl your hair with an iron,  
and may you not smooth your legs with rough pumice.  
Command that they do these things, by whose Phrygian measures  
mother Cybele, adored, is sung.  
A neglected form is appropriate for men; Theseus won away  
Minos's daughter, with temples adorned with no embroidery;  
Phaedra loved Hippolytus, he was not well groomed either;  
Adonis, though suited to the forest, was a care of the goddess.

Hollis states that Ovid, with this subject matter, attempts to counterbalance the potential effeminacy of the devoted lover by “insisting in a more masculine ideal” in respect to his appearance.<sup>126</sup> The potential lover under the instruction of Ovid should construct an uncultivated appearance. Both Theseus and Hippolytus succeeded in securing the love of their *puella* by being rough around the edges (*a nulla...comptus acu* and *nec erat bene cultus*), and Venus was satisfied with a lover who was suited to the forest (*silvis aptus*). Undoubtedly there is some Ovidian irony represented here in advising such a rough appearance for the lover, but this degree of simplicity highlights the *praeceptor*'s emphatic warning against excessive ornamentation.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to both the *puella* and the *iuvenis*, who should both display evidence of being refined (*culta/us*), the male lover should possess a neglected form (*forma neglecta*) and should not be well

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<sup>126</sup> Hollis (1977) 117.

<sup>127</sup> Hollis (1977) 117 gives reference to Cicero's *de Officiis* 1.130 (*a forma removeatur omnis viro non dignus ornatus*) as a model for the restriction of ornamentation for the adult male.

groomed (*nec erat bene cultus*).<sup>128</sup> It is not sophistication of the body that is key for men, but rather simplicity.

On the contrary, interest in excessive grooming, such as the curling of hair and the depilation of legs, is to be left to those who worship Cybele.<sup>129</sup> It is significant that these “feminine” activities are to be practiced by those men who are well-known for their status of being castrated.<sup>130</sup> Williams calls these figures who are no longer men “the ultimate scare-figure of Roman masculinity,” and this passage acts within a broad tradition of associating behaviors marked as feminine with the antithesis of the ideal Roman male: the *cinaedus*. The critical tone leveled at Cybele’s priests here differs from that we have seen in passages discussing the *pueri/iuvenes*. The latter have not yet entered into full adulthood, and therefore their possession of effeminate bodies that can then be eroticized is not a perversion; but an adult male playing an effeminate role is labeled a sexual deviant, and, therefore, Ovid’s tone reveals condemnation.<sup>131</sup> With castration comes a destruction of a prior masculinity, and denial of any potential future masculinity. Possible association with this type of effeminacy moves beyond that of the male beloved and is to be avoided by the male lover.

While beauty and appearance are key to any beloved’s identity, Ovid, as *praeceptor amoris*, presents a different aesthetic for the lover: his body should not

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<sup>128</sup> Williams (2010) 142 on masculinity being tied to “a certain uncultivated roughness.”

<sup>129</sup> Williams (2010) 139-144 discusses the different levels of grooming for the effeminate and the masculine. Further habits that contribute to accusations of effeminacy include: “walking delicately, talking in a womanish way, wearing loose, colorful, feminine clothing (including the *mitra* or Eastern-style turban), overindulging in perfume, curling one’s hair, and above all depilation, particularly of the chest and legs” (141). Also Richlin (1993) 541-548 and Corbeil (1996) 159-169.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Catullus 63 on the castration of Attis, whose gender becomes ambiguous at the moment of castration. For discussion on the significance of Attis’ ambiguity, see Skinner (1997a).

<sup>131</sup> See Richlin (1993) for extensive discussion of the prejudice faced by adult males who preferred the passive sexual role.

be overly-tended or ornamented in order to make it beautiful. Ovid goes on to specify what the lover should do to maintain an appropriate appearance for his status as elegiac lover (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.513-522):

*munditie placeant, fuscentur corpora Campo;  
sit bene conveniens et sine labe toga  
†lingua ne rigeat†; careant rubigine dentes;  
nec vagus in laxa pes tibi pelle natet.  
nec male deformet rigidos tonsura capillos:  
sit coma, sit trita barba resecta manu.  
et nihil emineant et sint sine sordibus ungues,  
inque cava nullus stet tibi nare pilus.  
nec male odorati sit tristis anhelitus oris,  
nec laedat nares virque paterque gregis.*

Let your body be pleasing in its cleanliness, and be dirtied on the Campus;  
may your toga fit well and be without stains.  
Let your tongue not be stiff; and may your teeth lack plaque;  
and may your wandering feet not swim in loose leather.  
And don't let a bad haircut ruin your inflexible hair:  
let your hair and your beard be cut by an experienced hand.  
And don't let your nails grow long and let them appear without dirt,  
and let no hair remain in your nostrils.  
And don't allow the breath of your foul mouth to be sour,  
and let not the man and father of the herd offend the nose.

Most of the advice given here by Ovid concerns basic grooming and cleanliness, given with a precision that implies little leeway.<sup>132</sup> Unlike the flowing (*fluentes*) or well-formed (*formosa*) hair of either the *puella* or *iuvenis*, that of the lover is inflexible (*rigidos*) and cut (*resecta*), suggesting a regimented yet simple appearance.<sup>133</sup> Further, while Hylas is able to pluck flowers with his fingernail,<sup>134</sup> the lover's nails should be trimmed short, a reflection of the discipline implied in

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<sup>132</sup> Olson (2008) 7 discusses how various terms that connote qualities of elegance, such as *munditia* or *mundare* and *lautus*, literally mean "cleanliness" or "to make clean" and "clean and neat," respectively. In specific discussion of women's beauty, Olson claims that cleanliness in ancient Rome "was equated with distinction," and further that "cleanliness for many writers seems to have been the basis of beauty and attraction." Also, see Hollis (1977) 118 on *munditie placens*, which he states may be "far from complimentary."

<sup>133</sup> This simple regiment is in keeping with the model of Priapus in Tibullus 1.4, whose hair and beard were *non...culta* and *non...nitet*.

<sup>134</sup> cf. Propertius 1.20.39. Tibullus 1.8.11-12 mentions the grooming of Phloe's nails in preparation for seeing Marathus.

the condition of the rest of his body. To be a proper Roman man, the lover needs only be clean, well-groomed, and well-dressed, which entails the wearing of a toga.<sup>135</sup> Remarking on the significance of the toga in Roman society, Richlin states that

“any deviance in the wearing of the toga would constitute a severe affront to the state; the right to wear the toga was the special prerogative of the citizen male. Foreigners and those banished were forbidden the use of the toga...Furthermore, the assumption of the toga marked the male’s transition from *puer* to *vir*.”<sup>136</sup>

The lover’s clothing reflects two things about the lover’s identity: his status as a Roman man, and as a man lacking ambiguity about his masculinity.<sup>137</sup> The specification that the toga fit well (*sit bene conveniens...toga*) separates him from accusations of effeminacy driven by loose clothing of effeminate figures in Roman society.<sup>138</sup> Exception from these terms is made for the condition of the male body when the lover appropriately engages in the masculine exercises conducted on the Campus Martius. Only then, when engaging in traditional masculine activity, can the body be dirtied.

The appearance of the adult male lover is extremely detailed and restricted in scope, in a manner similar to that of the *puella*. Just as the beauty of

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<sup>135</sup> Hollis (1977) 118 notes that this passage describes the appearance of “the Society man” of this time period.

<sup>136</sup> Richlin (1993) 545. See also Sebesta (1994) 13-21 on the significance of the toga under Augustus, and, briefly, Zanker (1988) 162 who notes the importance of the toga under Augustus, stating that he “succeeded in making the toga a kind of unofficial Roman state dress and a symbol of the proper attitude...”

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Propertius 4.1b.131-132 where Propertius puts aside the *bullae aureae* and takes up the *libera toga* of manhood and Propertius 4.2.24 where Vertumnus dons the toga and calls himself *vir*.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Tibullus 1.6.39-40, where the narrator shuns those who adorn their hair and wear loose togas (*tum procul absitis, quisquis colit arte capillos/et fluit effuso cui toga laxa sinu.*) and Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 3.445, where the *praeceptor* instructs his female students to avoid the man with the toga...*filo tenuissima*. See Putnam (1973) 113 and Maltby (2002) 272 for commentary on the loose toga, Gibson (2003) 281 on the finely woven toga, as well as Corbeil (1996) 161-162. In Tibullus 2.3.78, the narrator confuses his identity by assuming the more effeminate configuration (*laxam quid iuvat esse togam*).

the *puella* and *iuvenis* is paradigmatic in the generic characteristics attributed to each, the appearance of the lover reflects a similar, although inverted, standard through the absence of such ornamentation. His appearance is so prescriptive that anything (*cetera*) beyond this very basic level of grooming is considered effeminate (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.523-524):

*cetera lascivae faciant concedere puellae,  
et si quis male vir quaerit habere virum.*

All else let promiscuous women practice,  
and whoever is hardly a man and seeks to have a man himself.

Male beauty should be limited to cleanliness, while feminine beauty is connected to ornamentation. It is then to be left for women—and not even reputable women (*lascivae puellae*)—and for any male who is *male vir*. A man who practices anything beyond these basics is not only someone who is hardly a man (*male vir*), but seeks to play the feminine role in a same-sex relationship (*quaerit habere virum*). While implying how one should look as an elegiac lover, Ovid indicates the proper appearance of a respectable Roman citizen as well. Following these instructions protects the lover from becoming physically effeminate or falling into their habits. The *praeceptor* directs his students with the assumption that real men should not concern themselves with their personal beauty beyond these strict guidelines. So, the presentation of appearance does matter for the lover, so much so that the limitations of this appropriate appearance are strictly prescribed to them in significant detail.

### Beauty as Effeminizing and Appropriate Models for the Lover

The appearance of the lover is clearly a critical issue. Although his appearance rarely arises directly within the narrative of Roman elegy, these same



expectations and dangers underlie and inform other passages where any aspect of the lover's appearance is touched upon. Ovid's instructions recommending simplicity and austerity in appearance do not themselves rule out physical beauty for the lover. The treatment of beautiful lovers, outside of both male and female beloveds, does, however, as beauty within elegy is commonly tied to the potential for not only effeminate appearance, but behavior as well.

This connection appears in the *Amores*, as Ovid eavesdrops on a conversation between his *puella* and the *lena*. The lover hears a list of specifications on what makes a desirable customer, and unsurprisingly, money is of key importance. The *lena* gives insight into the value of other physical attributes also, stating that a lover's attractiveness is a bonus, not a necessity (Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.31-34):

*prosit ut adveniens, en aspice: dives amator  
te cupiit; curae, quid tibi desit, habet.  
est etiam facies, qua se tibi comparet, illi:  
si te non emptam vellet, emendus erat.*

How helpful Venus is as she arrives, behold: a rich lover  
has desired you: he has a care for what you lack.  
He even has good looks, which compete with your own:  
if he did not want to buy you, he would be for sale himself.

While the *lena* mentions physical appearance as a positive attribute of a male lover (*amator*), and he possesses a beauty that competes with that of the *puella* (*qua se tibi comparet*), his beauty is clearly identified as a secondary or optional concern by the use of *etiam*. Ultimately, it is his wealth that recommends him. It is possible for the lover to be attractive, it is even advantageous at times, but it is not essential to the process of seduction. This sentiment is repeated later in the same poem, where the *lena* indicates that the *puella* should turn away any who cannot offer gifts (Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.67-68):

*qui, quia pulcher erit, poscet sine munere noctem,  
quod det amatorem flagitet ante suum.*

Let the one who, because he is handsome, demands a night  
without giving a gift violently ask his lover for what he would give.

The *lena*'s advice is not surprising, given the lover's own complaints about the *puella*'s requests for gifts. What is surprising is that while beauty does not secure access to the *puella*, it certainly condemns a potential lover (*amator*) to accusations of potential effeminacy. The *lena* implies that the beautiful (*pulcher*) lover may have his own male lover (*amatorem...suum*), who would hand over gifts to him to pay the *puella*.

While physical appearance may be a bonus from the perspective of the *puella* (at least according to the *lena*), it offers little benefit, and even some possibility for harm, to the lover, whose masculinity is problematized by being attractive. Beauty suggests effeminacy, which the lover's wealth guards against. Without this wealth, the *lena* indicates that the *amator* himself, that lover who arrives without gifts (*sine munere*), would be for sale (*emendus erat*), and the buyer will not necessarily be a woman. For the impoverished lover, the lack of wealth defines him as being the passive partner in a same-sex relationship, at least according to the *lena*'s rhetoric. Money is the common factor in both pieces of the *lena*'s advice that prevents this hypothetical lover from falling into effeminacy. Although these two discussions of the poor lover do not directly indicate the elegiac poet-lover, they do raise the question of what the status of an attractive, impoverished poet-lover would be. Beauty, at best, problematizes the lover's status, and, at worst, completely effeminizes him.

Money is the deciding factor in both pieces of the *lena*'s advice, even to the point of the *puella* considering a freedman as a potential lover, if he has the

money to pay. Through this concern with money and exchange, the *lena* refutes the importance of traditional Roman social hierarchy in choosing a lover, as family and social status are deemed unimportant to the *puella's* consideration. With beauty also out of the running, this situation explains the economics of Roman elegy. The lover requires something beyond physical beauty to succeed, both as an elegiac lover and as a Roman man, and that requirement is talent. Ovid, in the role of *praeceptor amoris*, advises his students to cultivate such talent (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.108-122):

*sit procul omne nefas! ut ameris, amabilis esto;  
quod tibi non facies solave forma dabit.  
sis licet antiquo Nireus adamatus Homero  
Naiadumque tener crimine raptus Hylas,  
ut dominam teneas nec te mirere relictum,  
ingenii dotes corporis adde bonis.  
forma bonum fragile est, quantumque accedit ad annos,  
fit minor et spatio carpitur ipsa suo.  
nec violae semper nec hiantia lilia florent,  
et riget amissa spina relictas rosa:  
et tibi iam venient canes, formosae, capilli,  
iam venient rugae, quae tibi corpus arent.  
iam molire animum, qui duret, et astrue formae:  
solus ad extremos permanet ille rogos.  
nec levis ingenuas pectus coluisse per artes  
cura sit et linguas edidicisse duas.  
non formosus erat, sed erat facundus Ulixes,  
et tamen aequoreas torsit amore deas.*

May every sin be far away! Be loveable, so that you may be loved;  
a thing which neither appearance nor your body alone will give.  
May you be like Nireus, loved by Homer of old,  
or tender Hylas who was snatched by the crime of the Naiads  
so that you may hold your mistress and not wonder why you've been left,  
add gifts of the mind to those of the body.  
Beauty is a fragile advantage, however much comes in all these years  
becomes lesser, and in your lifetime beauty itself is snatched away.  
And neither violets nor gaping lilies flourish,  
and the abandoned thorn stiffens, when the rose has been lost:  
and now gray hairs come to you, beautiful,  
and wrinkles which make dry your body.  
Now build up your mind, which has hardened, and add it to your beauty:  
that alone remains at the final pyre.

And may it not be a light care to nourish your heart in liberal arts  
and to learn two languages.  
Ulysses was not handsome, but he was eloquent,  
and yet he burned two sea goddesses with love.

Ovid recommends that his student adds gifts of the mind (*ingenii dotes*) to his beauty in order to secure a lasting love with his *puella*; if one wishes his love to last he must have a gift that lasts as well. Beauty fades: only talent lasts until death.

The same connection here between effeminacy and beauty is made through the two sets of potential models for Ovid's student-lovers: they can be either a Ulysses or a Hylas/Nireus. In Homer, Nireus was known for his beauty and was second only to Achilles, while Hylas was abducted by nymphs because of his beauty.<sup>139</sup> Both characters meet bad ends. Once again sexual passivity is linked to the possession of beauty in the figures of Hylas and Nireus,<sup>140</sup> while Ovid pointedly describes Ulysses as not beautiful (*non formosus erat*). Ovid proffers Ulysses for many reasons: his intelligence, his lack of beauty, and his active role in a relationship.<sup>141</sup> Lenz suggests that the *praeceptor amoris* rejects the Hylas/Nireus model due to Ovid's established position against same-sex couples.<sup>142</sup> This is one possibility, but I posit, in addition, that the reason may be specifically because these two models are the passive partners. Ulysses is appropriate because he is the active male lover in that scenario. As Williams states, being the active partner was key to being a respectable Roman man:

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<sup>139</sup> Lenz (1969) 198 states that Ovid makes this claim about Homer's love because Nireus' beauty was so often mentioned.

<sup>140</sup> Hylas is mentioned in Propertius 1.20 as the lover of Hercules, and here Ovid states that Nireus is loved by Homer.

<sup>141</sup> The parallel here is spot on, considering that while both Ulysses and the lover are active adult males sexually, each is similarly dominated by the female partner (Calypso or the *puella*).

<sup>142</sup> Lenz (1969) 198. Cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.681-684 for the poet's view about *pueri* experiencing unequal pleasure.

First and foremost, a self-respecting Roman man must always give the appearance of playing the insertive role in penetrative acts, and not the receptive role...he must be the 'active,' not the "passive," partner. This can justly be called the prime directive of masculine sexual behavior for Romans, and it has an obvious relationship to broader structures of hierarchical male power. For according to this scheme, penetration is subjugation...and masculinity is domination...<sup>143</sup>

While Ulysses happens to be involved in a heterosexual relationship, it is his intellect and his role as the active partner, not the fact that his partner is female, that qualify him as an appropriate model for his reader. Significantly, Ovid also emphasizes that Ulysses was (known for being clever and eloquent (*facundus*)). Ulysses' intelligence is a quality placed in contrast to physical beauty and is equivalent to what a lover should seek (*ingenii dotes*).

If we return to the Tibullan narrator's conversation with the god Priapus, we see another figure with (unexpectedly) similar qualifications to act as a potential model for the elegiac lover. Although the god does not appear an obvious choice for amatory mentor, Filippetti has found in the figure of Tibullus' Priapus the "old, rustic *magister amoris*" (*vecchio rustico magister amoris*) that the poet borrows from bucolic tradition.<sup>144</sup> The shared role of *praeceptor amoris* has prompted Bright and Murgatroyd to explore the interplay between the Tibullan narrator and god.<sup>145</sup> In his analysis, Murgatroyd emphasizes the "mirroring" of these two figures as each gains a level of dignity when acting as *praeceptor* that ultimately yields to each becoming a "laughing-stock."<sup>146</sup> Bright argues that Priapus is an element of comic relief amidst the misery of Tibullus' failures that slowly gives way to the intensity of the lover's emotions; in the end, the poet

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<sup>143</sup> Williams (2010) 18.

<sup>144</sup> Filippetti (2010) 133.

<sup>145</sup> Also see Cairns (1979) 206-208 for his discussion of Tibullus 1.4 as a ring-composition that highlights the shared narrative circumstances (as both lover and *praeceptor amoris*) of both figures.

<sup>146</sup> Murgatroyd (1977) 114.

“remov[es] Priapus’ mask to show he is really Tibullus.”<sup>147</sup> Each scholar has recognized the parallels between these two figures reflected in their dignity (or lack thereof), their call for punishment, or their concern for vanishing youth, but both pay little attention to the possibility for the god to serve as model for elegiac values or physicality.

It is the qualities of Priapus as a partial *elegiac* model that are most surprising, and which, under closer examination, reveal that his qualifications match those of Ulysses.<sup>148</sup> The Tibullan lover seeks out Priapus, when he is in need of advice about pursuing boys (Tibullus 1.4.1-4). As Tibullus implies, Priapus is not an obvious choice physically, as his physical appearance does not exactly recommend him: his beard does not shine (*non...barba nitet*) and his hair is uncombed (*non...culta coma est*). But the conditions seemingly limiting the god mirror those of the elegiac poet-lover: the nudity of Priapus as statue becomes a reflection of his lack of material wealth, and his disheveled appearance shifts the focus to concerns other than physical beauty.<sup>149</sup> What the god does have is a certain *sollertia* (cleverness, skill, or ingenuity), a term that is borrowed from the didactic traditions to express technical knowledge and a quality echoing the talent (*ingenii dotes*) that Ovid recommends above for his student-lovers.<sup>150</sup>

Within the narrative of the elegiac love affair, then, beauty is not a factor in the

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<sup>147</sup> Bright (1978) 238.

<sup>148</sup> Williams (2010) 27 fn. 62 states that the circumstance evoked in Tibullus 1.4 is “an element of wish-fulfillment,” in which Priapus, as the divine version of the lover is successful despite his lack of beauty or wealth. He states that Priapus is successful in love due to his “patience, cleverness, and overall irresistibility.”

<sup>149</sup> Maltby (2002) 216 associates the adjective *nudus* with destitution, a circumstance comparable to the poet’s programmatic poverty. Also see Cairns (1979) 37-38 for Tibullus’ adoption of the Hellenistic topos connecting poverty and love. Filippetti (2010) 129, arguing for a bucolic precedent in Tibullus’ Priapus, connects Priapus’ nudity to his role as a god of the countryside.

<sup>150</sup> Filippetti (2010) 130-131 notes that this term is specifically relevant to didactic contexts and marks its use in Cicero’s *Arat.* 303 and *div.* 1.91, Manil. 1.73 and 95, Vitruvius 5.5.8 and 6.1.10, Horace’s *ars* 407, Ovid’s *Amores* 1.8.87, and Virgil’s *Georgics* 4.326-328.

lover's success, while money too often is, and *sollertia* should be. Filippetti states that in Tibullus 1.4 eros no longer lies within the realm of *mania*, but is a *techne* (*L'eros non è più mania: è techne*).<sup>151</sup> This concern for intellect embodied in the not so beautiful male is reminiscent of Ovid's suggestion of Ulysses as a model, in that both characters rely primarily on intellect, rather than physical appearance, to attract lovers. This intellectual prowess is paired with a lack of physical refinement, a paradigm that fits with what the elegiac poets have insinuated is appropriate to the poet-lover's self presentation, as seen throughout this chapter. The lover *can* be beautiful, but it is something that the elegiac poet neglects to mention or problematizes through a third character. Ultimately, it is his talent that marks him as elegiac lover and secures his masculinity.

As for the most prominent physical attribute of the god Priapus, his phallus, it is doubly significant as a symbol of sexual success and amatory failure. Although the Tibullan lover approaches Priapus for advice, a circumstance that indicates the god's success in love, amatory success does not fall within the tradition of the Priapus figure. Despite his obscenely large phallus, the god often succumbs to sexual impotence when he pursues a love object, and, in this incongruence, he serves as a comedic figure.<sup>152</sup> Uden points to Priapus' role as a "ridiculous figure" who is "used to lampoon a hypersexual desire for penetration."<sup>153</sup> The image of a hyper-sexual figure failing in the very pursuit for which he appears physically built reflects the condition of the elegiac lover, who despite his earnest pursuit of the *puella* most often sits outside her

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<sup>151</sup> Filippetti (2010) 131.

<sup>152</sup> There will be further discussion of Priapus' impotence in the next chapter. Ovid *Fasti* 6 presents Priapus' attempts at sexual conquest; these end in failure.

<sup>153</sup> Uden (2007) 4.

door while another is inside. Further, in Priapus' world, sexual success equals sexual punishment, and this paradigm does not fit in easily with the elegiac discourse on love and adoration.<sup>154</sup> The subtlety of Priapus as Tibullan *praeceptor* conceals the hyper-aggressive sexuality of the god known for inflicting punishments on thieves of any sex or status.<sup>155</sup> If one sees the lover's adoption of epic terms to describe sexual encounters with the *puella* as reflecting a punishing violence, as Fredrick does, Priapus' phallus does not problematize the figure as an elegiac model.<sup>156</sup> In each figure, both Tibullus' Priapus and the elegiac lover, there is a potential for violence hidden behind an innocuous docility. This concealment thus fits in well with the lover's fluid identity. He can be submissive when dealing with the *puella*, but he can take on an appropriately aggressive masculine role. While the poet-lover hedges on the question of violence, the opportunity is there simply through this choice of model.

The association of the poet-lover with these two models of appearance and behavior elevates his masculine status beyond simply not being effeminate. By not associating himself with the potentially effeminizing aspect of beauty, the lover secures his masculinity, but, in choosing these models, he asserts a degree of hyper-masculinity. The adoption of a Homeric hero as model automatically lifts the lover beyond the status of mere men. The god, Priapus, embodies the sexual model that the elegists have established as appropriate for the lover—that

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<sup>154</sup> See DeBrohun (1994) 59 for discussion on the lack of violence against the *puella* in Propertius.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. *Priapea* 13 for the variety of punishments offered to a *puer*, *puella*, or *barbatus* (a bearded adult man).

<sup>156</sup> Fredrick (1997) 179-186 traces the "oscillation" of both Propertius (in 2.1-2.13) and Ovid (in 1.5-1.7) between passive elegy (scopophilia) and aggressive epic (voyeurism). For similar arguments about the use of the violence of *militia amoris* to dominate the *puella*, see Cahoon (1988) who argues that Ovid's *Amores* show "growing unease" with the violence of love, which becomes particularly obvious with *Amores* 2.14 and Corinna's abortion, and Richlin (1992) for her argument about Ovid's rapes (in the *Ars Amatoria*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Fasti*) reflecting the "enjoyment of women's fear" as they suffer violence (169).



being the role of the active adult male—which mirrors traditional ideas of the sexual dynamic appropriate to the Roman man:

At Rome, this paradigm can handily be called a Priapic model of masculinity...Priapus' popularity in the Roman world is suggestive. He can be seen as something like the patron saint or mascot of Roman machismo, and his vigorous exploits with women, boys, and men indiscriminately are clearly a mainstay of his hyper-masculine identity.<sup>157</sup>

With the emphasis on being the active partner and with potential pairings with women or boys, Priapus serves as an appropriate model for elegiac masculinity.<sup>158</sup> Despite his pitiful lament as a lover and his subservience to his beloved,<sup>159</sup> the elegiac lover asserts a degree of masculinity above and beyond standard Roman masculinity and asserts a degree of hyper-masculinity as he takes the Homeric hero and aggressive god as models for his behavior. His elegiac identity vacillates between two extremes, those of the subservient lover and a man operating within traditional values, and thus cannot be tied to either term for long. His physical identity, however, is securely defined outside the parameters of effeminizing beauty.

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<sup>157</sup>Williams (2010) 18. J. Uden (2007) 10 contradicts this assessment of the figure of Priapus, stating he is "not the ideal of Roman masculinity but the parodic extreme against which it is expressed and defined." Richlin (1983) 58-59 discusses both the sexually aggressive and impotent Priapus.

<sup>158</sup> Elegy does not consider the adult male-adult male sexual combination, but the elegist does effeminize his rivals in other ways.

Richlin (1993) 528 takes the penetration model of same sex relationships further and claims that same sex relationships between adult men were frowned upon, stating "some forms of male desire for males in Greece and Rome were the object of extreme scorn...and that any male who felt such desire would be in a lot of trouble." Further, regardless of penetrator status, "public opinion did object when any man penetrated a freeborn man" (533).

<sup>159</sup> Uden (2007) 9 points out that in Priapic poetry, the god is known "for being shown up as a fool by the very people over whom he loudly claims to have power..." If read in this way, Priapus would be an even more appropriate model for the lover who is often made the fool by his beloved and whose success in love is uncertain.

## Conclusion

The classification of the elegiac lover as effeminate conflicts with his position regarding his own physical beauty. As seen above, when addressing the question of pure physical form, the lover moves toward being appropriately masculine in normative terms when he denies the importance of physical beauty. By not being associated with beauty, the lover separates the terms of his own identity from those of the beloveds, segregating himself from their effeminacy. While this division stands between the lover and beloveds, identity is not negotiated in complete isolation. Both beloveds help establish a sliding scale of contrasting aesthetics, along which the poet-lover himself moves. Furthermore, the male body of the *iuvenis* tells a story slightly different from that of the *puella*, and even her beauty is complicated to entail something deeper than superficial aspects of beauty. The narrator must cultivate something beyond beauty to be an elegiac lover, and, therefore, those beloveds who, at times, reflect aspects of his own identity must involve more as well. These qualms are highlighted especially when the poet-lover demonstrates an attempt to distance himself from his own body. When the body of the poet-lover is present, it is not his body that is to be admired, but his intelligence and poetic skill. And yet, the physical body is not completely irrelevant to his status as a lover. The terms of his appearance stand in contrast to that of the effeminized male, as an unornamented simplicity and basic cleanliness are dictated to him by Ovid.

In this chapter, we have seen reluctance on the part of the poet-lover to engage with the adult male body. This pattern will shift in later chapters on illness and amatory wounds, where the elegist no longer avoids the presence of the lover's body. Using the trope of lovesickness and other physical infirmities,

the elegist firmly associates the lover's identity with the body and its appearance. Through this association with the body, the lover has the potential to lean toward a more effeminate identity, as his physical illness marks him as weak and dependent upon the *puella* for his well being. This interaction with the *puella* marks the transition from the masculine figure we have seen above to what we will see in the more, although still not completely, effeminate character in the next chapter. Perhaps most important is that the lovesick poet does not introduce a healthy body to be admired, but a sick one. What this factor indicates, and how it intersects with this chapter's discussion of beauty, will be the subject of Chapter Three.

### Chapter III:

#### Infirmary and the Formulation of an Aesthetic for the Lover's Body

##### Introduction

Elegy's consistent reservations about the poet-lover's relationship to physical beauty throw into sharp relief those instances in which the lover overtly acknowledges and identifies the role of the corporeal as part of his elegiac and masculine identity. It is in the context of physical infirmity that the adult male body emerges most clearly in elegy. Through his lamentations about the physiological symptoms of lovesickness or impotence, the lover exposes his body to a degree of visual scrutiny otherwise limited through restricted association with beauty. Along with these standard tropes, the repeated mention of the poetic disfigurement of the elegiac limp—the hybridized couplet of pentameter and hexameter deemed imperfect when compared to the perfect metrics of epic's dactylic hexameter—paints both genre and its main narrator as physically unfit.<sup>160</sup> This discourse on the unwell body is reserved almost completely for the elegiac lover and his peers, further indicating that there are certain aesthetic standards suitable for the lover that are not appropriate for other elegiac characters and vice-versa. The beautiful body is the domain of the beloved. Contrarily, the lover limits his exposure to erotic description, and illness or disability lends little erotic appeal to the body. And so, the lover designates not a

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Amores* 1.1 and, in an allegorical comparison to tragedy, see 3.1.

healthy but an infirm body to represent his own identity as elegiac lover, but this choice is not as disadvantageous as it seems. It not only definitively marks his body as something different from that of the beloveds, but also symbolizes what it means to be an elegiac lover.

This chapter will approach three aspects of the compromised body: lovesickness, impotence, and the elegiac limp. The main interest of scholarship examining the male body has been to uncover how the symptoms of these three ailments reflect the qualities of elegiac meter, style, and composition.<sup>161</sup> Alison Keith argues that the “lover’s emaciated physique metaphorically embodies the poet’s slender verse” and that both the “scrawniness” and pallor of the lovesick lover are tied to elegy’s plain style and light verse.<sup>162</sup> I will, instead, examine these infirmities in the context of the narrative to show how elegy employs this image to lay the foundations for the elegiac identity of the lover within the narrative. As far as the physical symptoms of each sickness mark him as weak and subject to a dominating *puella*, they reinforce the conventional gender dynamic of the effeminate lover and his status as elegiac lover. Beyond confirmation of this inversion, however, I will demonstrate how the elegiac lover takes ownership of this conventionally defective body and its weaknesses, and then defends it against accusations of effeminacy. In the end, the lover’s body, not wholly effeminate or masculine, remains liminal, as its character shifts between terms reflecting shame and decorum.

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<sup>161</sup> Keith (1999) 41-62 traces the conventional metaphorical connection between an author’s body and his literary text in elegy through the filter of Roman rhetorical theory. For an examination of the symptoms of lovesickness as metaphor for poetics, see 50-52, 54-57, 59; on the lover’s impotence 58-59; on the elegiac limp, 55-56. For a metapoetic reading of sex and impotence, see Sharrock (1995).

<sup>162</sup> Keith (1999) 54-57.

In the real world of ancient Rome, individuals with physical infirmities “for the most part were not merely marginalized, but outcast in the fullest sense of the word.”<sup>163</sup> These prejudices are reproduced even in the literary world, where those suffering from physical imperfection and affliction experience ridicule regardless of social status, whether one considers Homer’s disdainful portrait of the common soldier Thersites or the gods’ amusement at the limping Hephaestus in the *Iliad*.<sup>164</sup> Further, the mockery of the Emperor Claudius in Suetonius’ account “demonstrates a consciousness of the propensity to deride the disabled on the part of the Roman people,” and, even if false, presents infirmity as something to be hidden from public as much as possible.<sup>165</sup> Given what is known about how physical weakness or disability was generally viewed in the ancient world, why choose this mode to represent the lover’s body, about which the reader otherwise receives minimal information?

I will first examine the lover’s acceptance of the physical symptoms of lovesickness as part of his identity. On first glance, lovesickness, and the physical symptoms that accompany it, may appear to act as little more than a traditional motif in the service of love poetry. A conventional set of terms and images has emerged from a tradition of amatory poetry that has roots in Homeric epic before being more explicitly rendered in seventh-century B.C. Greek lyric,<sup>166</sup> and, when read with knowledge of these textual precedents, it is easy to overlook the significance behind the specific rendering of that paradigm within elegy. I will demonstrate, however, that elegiac lovesickness serves as far

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<sup>163</sup> Garland (2010) 28. See also Winzer (1997) 81-88. Children who were born with disabilities, mental or physical, were often rejected by the *paterfamilias* and exposed, particularly among the lower classes.

<sup>164</sup> *Iliad* 2.211-223 and 1.599-600.

<sup>165</sup> Garland (2010) 41.

<sup>166</sup> Cyrino (1995) 2-4.

more than a mere repetition of tradition. The symptoms are the same, but the context and meaning differ. The formulation of this aesthetic paradigm is derived in response to and strictly outside of that defined for the *puella*, which signals a desire to distance the lover from the truly feminine aesthetic in favor of one that affirms the lover's status as non-object—or of subject.

Similarly, the lover's impotence with its resulting self-reproach and mockery functions in ways beyond painting a pathetic figure. The most accessible reading of the poorly performing body is as an affirmation of the lover's lack of power, both sexually and in terms of masculinity. His lack of amatory success is fundamental to his identity as an elegiac lover, but this one sign confirms another aspect of his identity: that of the faithful lover. In both instances, lack of sexual success confirms his elegiac identity. Just as is the case with lovesickness, this one physical symptom can be renegotiated to redeem the lover's masculinity, as the lover reconfigures this physical humiliation as a sign of sexual prowess.

The final section will adopt a slightly different perspective on the infirm body in its examination of the elegiac limp. While I will not attempt to expand the discussion on the metaphorical function of the body *per se*, it is necessary to engage with this much discussed interpretation of the body to uncover deeper significance of the metaphor. My examination will move backwards from the metaphor of the limping verse to the poet-lover's body to determine the metaphor's implications for his elegiac identity. Through this metaphor implicating the physical body, we will see the fundamental rivalry of poet-lover and soldier deliberately articulated, as poetic, amatory, and physical opposites.

The body acts as a hindrance in each of these cases, but it is a barrier necessary for maintaining the lover's poetic identity. Doubtless, this effect is part of the appeal in adopting this physiology. The elegists push these disadvantages beyond the simple and direct reading that confirms an inverted gender dynamic. In the end, the sickly body that characterizes the unsuccessful lover is fundamental to maintaining the identity of a successful elegiac poet. While his physical weakness mirrors his masculine limitations within the elegiac narrative, the lover, to some extent, revalues the infirm body to reclaim degrees of his masculinity.

#### Elegy's Rendering of Lovesickness

Roman elegy's treatment of love slips easily into the framework established by Homer and continued in Greek tragedy, Hellenistic poetry, and Roman comedy.<sup>167</sup> Despite the distance of time, space, and genre, love as a disease is nearly universally described in terms of physical symptoms tied to an initial cause of psychological distress.<sup>168</sup> The psychological anguish experienced due to unrequited love is made tangible through the physical symptoms.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Booth (1997) 153 notes that lovesickness in all of these genres has physical symptoms, but indicates that Catullus 76 is an exception to lovesickness as a physical illness (153 and 156).

<sup>168</sup> Grmek (1989) 43 discusses the lyric poets' (Archilochus, Alcaeus, and Sappho) elaboration of love as a disease that causes their physical symptoms. Lloyd (2003) 118 discusses the Greeks' belief that the health of the body and soul were interconnected using Herodotus' opinion that Cambyses would inevitably suffer physical illness, because he was obviously unwell mentally (3.33). For similar, also see Winkler (1990) 82.

<sup>169</sup> Cyrino (1995) 1-2 and 6 describes the two kinds of love represented within Greek poetry: that which is mutual, and that which is unrequited and "unfulfilled or even unfulfillable." It is unreturned love that causes the symptoms of illness. Winkler (1990) 82-83 states that "if the lover's desire is not reciprocated...the situation is desperate indeed, often expressed in taking to bed, wasting away and, if untreated death."

Elegists also make a connection between love and death; at times death is a result of love, but at others it is equated with love.



Lovesickness brings the illness out of the metaphorical to the physical.<sup>170</sup> In the following passage describing what the lover projects will be the future mental condition of Gallus, Propertius explicitly connects the onset of mental anguish and physical decline to being in love (Propertius 1.5.13-22):

*a, mea contemptus quotiens ad limina curres!  
cum tibi singultu fortia verba cadent,  
et tremulus maestis orietur fletibus horror,  
et timor informem ducet in ore notam,  
et quaecumque voles fugient tibi verba querenti,  
nec poteris, qui sis aut ubi, nosse miser,  
tum grave servitium nostrae cogere puellae  
discere et exclusum quid sit abire domo;  
nec iam pallorem totiens mirabere nostrum,  
aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego.*

Ah, how often you will run to my door after being rejected!  
When your brave words will fall due to sorrowful sobbing,  
and a trembling shudder from sad weeping will arise,  
and fear will carve a misshapen mark on your face,  
and the words that you are looking for flee though you seek them,  
miserable you will not be able to recognize who or where you are!  
Then you will be compelled to learn the heavy slavery to our girl  
and what it is to depart from a house when you have been locked out;  
nor now will you be amazed so often at my pallor,  
or why in my whole body I am nothing.

We see Gallus' symptoms progress from exhibition of mental agony, as described through terms denoting weeping, misery, and fear (*singultu, maestis fletibus, miser, and timor*), to the physical symptoms of an aged face, pallor, and thinness (*informem...in ore notam, pallorem, corpore nullus ego*).<sup>171</sup> Physical symptoms appear as a direct result of the psychological distress, as the distinction between physical and emotional is blurred: sadness gives rise to physical shuddering (*tremulus maiestis orietur fletibus horror*), fear actively leads to a facial wrinkle

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<sup>170</sup> Grmek (1989) 43 discusses how the medical writers, most significant of whom are Soranus, Galen, and Oribasius, considered love a disease in medical literature and anecdotes.

<sup>171</sup> Later in 2.1, Propertius goes so far as to describe love in terms of the torments suffered in Hades, which interestingly have both psychological and physical components.

(*timor informem ducit in ore notam*), and misery (*miser*) causes one to become unrecognizable to oneself (*nec poteris, qui sis aut ubi, nosse*). While the pallor (*pallorem*) and thinness (*sim toto corpore nullus ego*)<sup>172</sup> due to amatory hardship are technically suffered by Propertius as lover, he implies that Gallus will soon experience these symptoms as his illness progresses. These symptoms, both the mental and the physical, are both tied to a single source—love.

This elegiac depiction of lovesickness *appears* indistinguishable from what may be seen in any amatory poetry: emotional pain is translated in visual terms that present a poetic image to the reader. While Roman elegy closely models its treatment of lovesickness on that of early Greek and Hellenistic poetry, with each describing similar methods of contagion (seeing the beloved), difficulty of remedy (with no medical cure possible),<sup>173</sup> and range of symptoms (thinness, pallor, fever, trembling), the subtle differences in the rendering of elegiac lovesickness reflect the adaptation of the trope for elegy's particular purposes. These symptoms function as more than a continuation of poetic convention or as a metaphor for elegiac poetics. Furthermore, they are not the mere ailments of someone who happens to be in love, but they make up the particular domain and core of the elegiac lover's physical identity.

Despite Propertius' claim above that his body has faded to nothing (*corpore nullus ego*), the body that comes with lovesickness emerges as an identifying sign specifically for an *elegiac* lover. Ovid, once again as *praeceptor*

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<sup>172</sup> Fedeli (1980) 163-164 ties this phrase, borrowed from comedy, specifically to the topos of physical consumption associated with the elegiac lover.

<sup>173</sup> Caston (2006) 284-292 discusses the nature of the elegist's cure in comparison to that offered by the philosophers. See Propertius 1.1, 1.10, 2.4, 2.30, 3.17, 3.21, 3.24; Tibullus 1.5, 2.4; Ovid *Amores* 3.11a for other examples of potential cures, which range from practicing magic, drinking wine, taking another lover, moving far away from one's beloved, and writing or listening to poetry. For the idea of love as incurable see Propertius 1.5, 2.1; Tibullus 2.3 (where Apollo is unable to cure love with herbs).

*amoris*, gives detailed instruction on the appearance his student-lovers should desire. In a confirmation of the implied aesthetic that Propertius had earlier established in the *Monobiblos*, Ovid explicitly designates these qualities as the particular markers of a lover. Here it is not the mind that the lovers should cultivate, but the lovesick body, which stands as proof of one's identity as a lover (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.723-38):

*candidus in nauta turpis color: aequoris unda  
debet et a radiis sideris esse niger;  
turpis et agricolae, qui vomere semper adunco  
et gravibus rastris sub Iove versat humum;  
et tua, Palladiae petitur cui fama coronae,  
candida si fuerint corpora, turpis eris.  
palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti;  
hoc decet, hoc †multi non valuisse putant.†  
pallidus in Side silvis errabat Orion;  
pallidus in lenta Naide Daphnis erat.  
arguat et macies animum, nec turpe putaris  
palliolum nitidis imposuisse comis.  
attenuant iuvenum vigilatae corpora noctes  
curaque et in magno qui fit amore dolor.  
ut voto potiare tuo, miserabilis esto,  
ut qui te videat dicere possit 'amas.'*

A fair color is unsightly on a sailor: he should be dark  
due to the waves of the sea and the rays of the stars;  
it's also ill-suited for a farmer, who always with bent plough  
and with heavy rake turns the soil below Jupiter;  
and to the one by whom the fame of the Palladian crown is sought,  
you will be indecent, if your body is fair.  
Let every lover be pale: this is the color appropriate to the lover;  
this is appropriate, many think that this is not healthy.  
Orion pale wandered after Side in the woods;  
Daphnis pale wandered after the bitter nymph.  
Let thinness also prove your mind, and you will not be thought wickedly  
to have put a little cloak over clean hair.  
Wakeful nights make thin the bodies of youths  
not to mention the care and grief which comes with great love.  
May you be miserable, so that with your vow you will accomplish  
that whoever sees you is able to say, "you are in love."

As is appropriate, the lover's physical symptoms declare the condition of his mind (*arguat et macies animum*). The same identifying symptoms of lovesickness

as seen in Propertius' passage above recur in Ovid's prescriptive instructions for what a lover should look like: he should embrace pallor (*palleat* / *pallidus*)<sup>174</sup> and thinness (*macies* / *attenuant*),<sup>175</sup> both indications of insomnia and grief. Not only are these symptoms present, but they are appropriate (*aptus* / *decet*) to the lover. While the poet-lover would normally complain of his condition, the hortatory mood of the verbs (*palleat*, *arguat*, and *attenuant*) characterizes this advice not as a lament at the state of the lover, but rather as encouragement to pursue an unhealthy appearance. The physical body confirms the lover's elegiac status and activities. It is not only appropriate (*decet*), but it is indicative of one's status as a lover to such an extent that someone can identify the lover solely by this appearance (*ut qui te videat, dicere posit "amas"*).

Yet, one does not immediately become an elegiac lover. In another adaptation that demonstrates the distinctive quality of elegiac lovesickness, the genre confirms that the symptoms are not so unexceptional as to be the domain of just any person who happens to love. In a way similar to the rites of passage for manhood, the lover must go through various stages before reaching a stage designated as elegiac lover. As with many diseases, symptoms appear in a systematic order, and because of this the progress of the disease can be traced based on these identifying symptoms. Within elegy, these symptoms are so essential to identification as a lover that without them one's status as lover may be subject to scrutiny. Without symptoms, the affliction, and therefore poetic

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<sup>174</sup> Richardson (1977) 386 states that "Roman lovers were traditionally pale and wasted." For other instances of pallor as a sign of lover, see Propertius 1.1.22, 1.5.21, 1.9.17, 1.13.7. Also see Laigneau (1999) 49, where she states that *pallidus* is often associated with death and is not an erotic term.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.733, where *macies* is a sign of the lover's devotion (*arguat et macies animum*).

status, is uncertain. Propertius states as much to the epic poet, Ponticus, as he gives him advice on being a lover in his new relationship (Propertius 1.9.17-18):

*necdum etiam palles, vero nec tangeris igni:  
haec est venturi prima favilla mali.*

You aren't even pale yet, indeed you are not yet touched by fire:  
this is but the first spark of the evil to come.

Although Ponticus has embarked upon the beginning stages of love (*prima favilla mali*), Propertius ridicules his sorrow because he does not yet display the more advanced signs of one truly in love, as his lack of pallor demonstrates (*necdum etiam pallam*). Fedeli states that the use of *etiam* here is not repetition (*un'inutile ripetizione*), but marks this statement as emphatic.<sup>176</sup> This reading stresses the fact that Ponticus has more to suffer beyond what he already has. Propertius claims that Ponticus is already *insanus* (line 16) with love, yet he indicates that the real problems come later when the mental anguish has progressed to such an extent that it can be seen physically; at that point, Ponticus will truly understand what it means to be in love and be a lover. At this stage, he's still a novice.

Progression of the disease, and the status that comes with it, is indicated with the definite onset of pallor and emaciation. Propertius 1.5 indicated as much, when the lover predicted the emotional turmoil and physical deterioration that his peer, Gallus, would suffer, as well as the eventual pallor and emaciation that Propertius himself has already endured.<sup>177</sup> At a later stage in his relationship, the poet-lover once again confronts Gallus at a point when he shows the effects of this later stage of love (Propertius 1.13.5-8):

*dum tibi deceptis augetur fama puellis,  
certus et in nullo quaeris amore moram,*

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<sup>176</sup> Fedeli (1980) 241.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Propertius 1.5.21-22 above.

*perditus in quadam tardis pallescere curis  
incipis, et primum lapsus abire gradu.*

Although your fame for deceiving girls grows,  
and being sure you seek no prolonged delay in any love,  
destroyed you begin to grow pale with late care for a certain girl,  
and slipping at first you start to go astray.

Gallus is in the first stages of pallor (*pallescere...incipis*), and he has only just begun to grow pale. To indicate the severity of the infection, which is still in the first stages of escalation (*primum lapsus abire gradu*), Gallus is already described as being destroyed (*perditus*) by this illness. Further, Propertius implies that while Gallus had been once reluctant to linger in any one affair, he is now in for a lengthy period of torment.<sup>178</sup> He has not yet reached the stage of Propertius' narrator, but the effects are already damaging. The symptoms are indicative of how entangled one's physical body is with identification as a lover.

Contrarily, when these indications of affliction are lacking, this absence of signifier is interpreted as absence of love. Propertius begins to experience problems with Cynthia, because his physical symptoms are not sufficient to indicate his love for her. He asks her if he has been shunned because he displays little indication of his affection through a changed complexion (Propertius 1.18.17-22):

*an quia parva damus mutato signa colore  
et non ulla meo clamat in ore fides?  
vos eritis testes, si quos habet arbor amores,  
fagus et Arcadio pinus amica deo.  
a quotiens tenera resonant mea verba sub umbra,  
scribitur et vestris Cynthia corticibus!*

Or is it because I give little indication with a changed color,  
and no fidelity declares itself on my lips?  
You will be my witnesses, if a tree has any loves,  
beech tree and pine beloved to the Arcadian god.

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<sup>178</sup> Richardson (1977) 181 translates *abire* to mean something like "to go to ruin."

Oh, how often my words have echoed below your tender shade,  
and Cynthia is written on your bark.

Propertius assumes that Cynthia's concerns stem from the paradigm that has been established by and for the elegiac lovers: an elegiac lover should be pale (*damus mutato signa colore*). Without the concomitant pallor of the lover, she doubts his loyalty.<sup>179</sup> While he defends himself against this accusation, he provides witnesses (*testes*) to secure the constancy of his own status: the trees upon which he writes his affections for Cynthia. The implication of Cynthia's accusation is that his status as elegiac lover is threatened as well, and Propertius attempts to prove his position as elegiac lover through elegiac writings (*scribitur...Cynthia corticibus*).<sup>180</sup>

### Confirmation of the Beloved's and Lover's Aesthetic Paradigms

These amatory symptoms, pallor and thinness, have been shown to be anything but arbitrary applications of the lovesickness trope. Instead, each is entangled with the narrator's identity specifically as an elegiac lover, and, without these physical signs, the narrator is not recognizable as elegiac lover. The result is a paradigm of the proper aesthetic that a lover should embody. This paradigm functions in a similar manner to that created for the beloved, but it has been formulated with an intention of differentiation. Comparison of a few sets of

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<sup>179</sup> Cf. *Amores* 2.7.9-10, where Ovid suffers similar accusations from his *puella* based on the state of his complexion. Even in this case, pallor is seen as being indicative of love, only here of love for another *puella*.

<sup>180</sup> Kennedy (1993) 51 states that "'scratching Cynthia on bark' can signify in Latin a lover scratching the name of his beloved on a tree, or a poet inscribing the theme of the mistress in a book..." Both Miller (2004) 65 and Pincus (2004) 181-183 also note the parallel with Virgil, *Eclogues* 10.52-54 and Gallus' declaration that he will carve his *amores* onto the trees. Richardson (1977) 198 and Camps (1985) interpret this reference to writing on bark as carvings on a tree. Thus Propertius secures his status as lover through this humorous reference to writing elegiac poetry. Ross (1975) 72-73 and Keith (2008) 75-76 link this passage to Callimachus' version of the myth of Acontius and Cydippe in *Aetia* 3.

terms used to indicate complexion and physical shape will demonstrate the extent to which each paradigm defines a discrete and incompatible aesthetic appropriate to each elegiac character.

As seen in chapter two, the elegiac paradigm of beauty supplies a shared set of conventional terms to describe the bodies of both beloveds. In terms of complexion, the most common of these terms are the noun, *candor*, and the adjectives, *candidus* and *niveus*, which all indicate both the color and the quality of skin tone: fair and radiant. The tone and quality of the beloved's complexion differs markedly from that of the lover's, whose pallor, represented through the noun, *pallor*, the adjective, *pallidus*, or the verb, *palleo*, is best described as pale and wan. Through the juxtaposition of these two sets of terms (at Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.723-32), Ovid notes the potential for comparison, but then marks each term as distinct and appropriate for differing categories of body. In his discussion of the complexions of various men and its suitability to their occupation, Ovid denies that being fair (*candidus*) is appropriate to the sailor, the farmer, or the athlete.<sup>181</sup> In these cases, darkness (*niger*) is a sign of their toil in the sun (or ironically the stars) and the correlating suitability of their occupations. Although Ovid does go on to state that it is fitting for lovers to be pale, he does not use this same adjective, *candidus*, to describe that pallor; Ovid instead uses the adjective *pallidus* and the verb *palleat* to describe that

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<sup>181</sup> In erotic contexts, the male beloved's complexion may be described with the term *niveus*, as with Adonis at Propertius 2.13.53; *candor* is used for Hylas in Propertius 1.20 and *candidus* for Amor in Propertius 2.3.24 and Bacchus' shoulders in Propertius 3.17.29. These terms are not used for male lovers (except for the case of Ovid, *Amores* 2.13, where he gives thanks for the *puella's* health). Tibullus 1.4.4 indicates that, Priapus, the model for the poet-lover, has a beard that does not shine (*nitet*), and nowhere else is this verb or its participle used for the lover.



complexion.<sup>182</sup> The lover, while not included in this category of occupations that spends time in the sun, is not relegated to that class whose bodies should be *candidus*. The application of this paradigm to elegiac lovers is solidified through Orion and Daphnis, who serve as models for the elegiac lover (at *Ars Amatoria* 1.731-732): both are pale (*pallidus*) and in pursuit of their respective *puellae*. This distinction draws a sharp line between what is appropriate and what is not appropriate for not only for those more traditional occupations, but also for lovers. Although there is some similarity implied between *candidus* and *pallidus* by the proximity of these two adjectives, the abrupt change in term signals disparity in both the tone of the color implied and in the significance embedded in the term as signifier. This association not only further marks the term *pallidus* as masculine and *candidus* as effeminizing, but also redeems to some extent the weakness entailed by the lover's lovesickness.

We can identify a similar separation in the terms of physical form as well, as the quality and meaning behind the form of the bodies of these two elegiac categories are differentiated. The adjective *formosus*, used to designate the beloved, indicates meaning beyond general connotations of beauty and physical appearance; at its very root meaning, it implies positive evaluation about the shape of the body. The description of the beloved's body as something shapely, something focused on form, is an aspect that makes him or her subject to visual objectification. In contrast, the lover cultivates not a healthy body to be admired for its beauty, but the unhealthy body. In the case of lovesickness, the lover's very thinness (usually described through the terms *macies* and *tenuo*) highlights

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<sup>182</sup> Richardson (1977) 188 states that *pallor* indicated more of a "sickly yellow" and Maltby (2003) 204 states that *niveus* and *candidus* were the terms used for "an attractively pale complexion," whereas *pallidus* indicated an "unhealthy paleness" and is "hardly complimentary."

the fact that he is not shapely (*formosus*). In this case, the lover's body and the characteristics that identify him as lover occupy the opposite end of the physical spectrum. He is thin not only because he suffers from lovesickness, but also because he cannot be shapely (*formosus*). He is not a beloved, and as such he requires a different paradigm to define his physicality.

The problematic nature of these symptoms when applied to the *puella* further solidifies the division in aesthetic terminology generally established throughout elegy's *corpus*. In Ovid's advice about the potential *puella*'s appearance, he indicates how the *puella* should cover up her faults (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.267-270):

*quae nimium gracilis, pleno velamina filo  
sumat, et ex umeris laxis amictus eat.  
pallida purpureis tangat sua corpora virgis,  
nigrior ad Pharii confuge piscis opem.*

The girl who is too slender, let her take a garment  
with a full shape, and let a covering hang loose from her shoulders,  
let her touch her pallid body with purple stripes,  
the darker complected should resort to the aid of the Egyptian fish.<sup>183</sup>

While the *puella*'s thinness (*gracilis*) is not described in the same terms as the lover's lovesickness, her pallor (*pallida corpora*) is. Ovid specifically marks the term *pallida* as negative,<sup>184</sup> as he indicates that she should camouflage her pale complexion with purple stripes. The erotic overtones implied by the designation of the stripes as purple will override the non-erotic and sickly quality of her

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<sup>183</sup> Gibson (2003) 206 notes the problematic and obscure reference to the Egyptian fish. Ovid is referring to whitening the face, and Gibson states that this was accomplished with crocodile dung. To fit this interpretation, he uses the textual conjecture *Phariae...pristis*, to indicate the "Egyptian sawfish," which has teeth similar enough to those of the crocodile.

<sup>184</sup> The terms *pallor*, *pallidus*, or *palleo*, when not applied to the lover's lovesickness, most often entail scenes of death (cf. Propertius 4.5.72, 4.7.36; Tibullus 1.10.38, [3.1.28], [3.5.21], [3.5.25]), fear (cf. Propertius 2.5.30, 4.8.9, 4.8.54; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.487, 3.703, *Heroides* 1.14, 11.77, 12.97), or the *puella*'s true illness (for which see discussion below). The lover's pallor is transferable to the *puella*, but the majority of these uses designate something very different and unrelated to affection or unrequited love, with the exception of Cynthia in Propertius 1.1.22.

complexion.<sup>185</sup> The nature of her shape is also significant; her slimness is not described in the same terminology as true illness or the lover's emaciation (*macies*), but rather she is too slender (*nimum gracilis*).<sup>186</sup> The term indicating physical form (*gracilis*) is qualified in a way that maintains the erotic character of the *puella*, and thus her slimness. Because it hints at erotic potential, it does not fall into the category of illness. Being too thin is not a positive attribute, but it has not fallen to the point of being wholly negative (*macies*).

Definition of the lover in contrast to a paradigm of elegiac beauty rehabilitates the lover's physical body and his corresponding masculine status. He may be effeminate in some respects, but in terms of his physicality he is not an object and not feminine. Even beyond creating separate paradigms for the beloveds and himself, the poet-lover revalues the significance behind those terms used to describe his body. While the elegist colors his world with elegiac values, he keeps one foot in the 'real' world that works according to the values of conventional masculinity. As far as this perceived weakness defines his role as elegiac lover, he embraces the body's limitations, but when it calls his masculine identity into question directly, the lover engages with the discourse to deny and redraw the limits of traditional paradigms of masculinity using conventional terms to do so. Within the elegiac world, the lover is subject to the *puella* and this indicates his role as lover; but in relation to other men, he takes an active role in redefining the elegiac aesthetic around the lover's sick body to align it more closely with what has been deemed suitable for proper male bodies. In

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<sup>185</sup> For uses of the adjective *purpureus* in erotic contexts, cf. [Tibullus 3.4.30], Ovid, *Amores* 1.4.22, 1.14.20, 3.14.23. As an epithet for Amor himself: Ovid, *Amores* 2.1.38, 2.9.34, *Ars Amatoria* 1.232.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.660, where *gracilis* is the term a lover uses to compliment a *puella*, and *macies* is negative. *macies* used in the context of the *puella* indicates ill health.

redeeming the imperfect body, the lover redeems his status outside of the elegiac world, while maintaining the alterity of the elegiac world.

### Comparison of True Illness and Metaphorical Lovesickness

Those instances where elegy portrays actual illness and infirm bodies further confirm the distinction between the two aesthetic paradigms of beauty and lovesickness, as this context underscores the different concerns in the presentation of these two categories of the body. The contrasting gravity of true and metaphorical sickness does not translate to the effects of these illnesses upon the physical body. The lovesick body of the poet-lover suffers a greater degree of damage and decline from his metaphorical illness than that of the *puella* endangered by a realistic life-threatening sickness. The sick body of the lover is not an aesthetic intended for visual pleasure in the same way as that of the *puella*. Even when truly ill, the *puella*'s body maintains an erotic quality that supersedes the narrative reality presented by the lover.

As the poet-lover, Propertius, asks the gods for the prompt recovery of his *puella*, he does not take advantage of the opportunity to describe the particular symptoms of her illness or the state of her sick body.<sup>187</sup> Instead the poem illustrates the *puella*'s illness through a preoccupation with her beauty, both in the characterization of her sick body and the identification of the cause of disease (Propertius 2.28.1-2):

*Iuppiter, affectae tandem miserere puellae:  
tam formosa tuum mortua crimen erit.*

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<sup>187</sup> Yardley (1973) 283-288 relates the lover's tending of the *puella* to Hellenistic philosophical treatises on friendship. For other passages where the *puella*'s illness signals the lover's devotion, cf. Tibullus 1.5; Ovid, *Amores* 2.13 and *Ars Amatoria* 2.315f.

Jupiter, pity my afflicted girl at last:  
your crime will be the death of one so beautiful.

Here, the *puella* is described as afflicted (*affectae*) with illness and faces the possibility of death, and yet we find that the lover directs the reader's attention to the *puella*'s beauty. Fedeli suggests that the narrator addresses Jupiter, here, because beautiful women are the concern of that god and Cynthia possesses extraordinary beauty.<sup>188</sup> The beauty of the *puella* dictates the terms of the lover's supplication, and, furthermore, even in this circumstance, he employs the eroticizing vocabulary of the beloveds to describe her illness. The close connection of the *puella* with the adjective (*formosa*), although literally an adjective describing her death, colors the poet's description of the *puella* and illustrates the feature he considers most significant to her identity: her beauty. Propertius continues on with this interest, as he proposes possible causes for her illness, which are centered around her beauty (Propertius 2.28.9-16):

*num sibi collatam doluit Venus? illa peraeque  
semper formosis invidiosa dea est.  
an contempta tibi Iunonis templa Pelasgae?<sup>189</sup>  
Pallados aut oculos ausa negare bonos?  
semper, formosae, non nostis parcere verbis.  
hoc tibi lingua nocens, hoc tibi forma dedit.  
sed tibi vexatae post multa pericula vitae  
extremo veniat mollior hora die.*

Was Venus grieved that you were compared to her? She is a  
goddess equally jealous of those girls always shapely.  
Or have Pelasgian Juno's temples been condemned by you?  
Or did you dare to deny that Athena's eyes are lovely?  
Always, you beautiful girls do not know to spare your words.

<sup>188</sup> Fedeli (2005) 784. Note the contrast with the address to Phoebus below in [Tibullus] 3.10.

<sup>189</sup> There is debate over the use of *templa* (Heyworth), *planta* (Alton), or *membra* (Waardenburgh) in this position. *templa* does not appear appropriate to the context emphasizing the *puella*'s beauty. In the context of the other two goddesses, the mention of beauty and envy gives clear reference to the judgment of Paris, but Bailey (1967) 118-119 argues that Juno was not particularly known for her beauty or any physical flaws and that *templa* is a reference to the myth of Proetades.

This is what a wicked tongue and a beautiful form have given to you.  
But after many dangers of a difficult life  
may a softer hour come to you in your final day.

According to Propertius, the *puella*'s beauty, and her pride in that beauty, may be the cause of her illness. She is beautiful to the point of stirring the envy of the gods, whether this is Venus herself, Juno, or Athena—those three goddesses whose beauty led to the Judgment of Paris and the Trojan War. Here again, the emphasis of the poet-lover is on characterizing the physical beauty of the *puella*, not her illness. Despite the opportunity to create a visual spectacle of the body of an afflicted *puella* and the effects illness has on her beauty, the poet instead emphasizes that feature that ensures her status as *puella*. The consistency of the *puella*'s form through this actual illness stands in sharp contrast to the deterioration of the lover's body caused by the metaphorical lovesickness. Her body is still to be admired, while his was never written to be objectified and moves even further from this status as visual object.

While Propertius isolates his *puella* from physical disfigurement, Sulpicia as *puella* does assume the physical symptoms of an ill body when she succumbs to sickness ([Tibullus] 3.10.1-12):

*huc ades et tenerae morbos expelle puellae,  
huc ades, intonsa Phoebe superbe coma.  
crede mihi, propera: nec te iam, Phoebe, pigebit  
formosae medicas applicuisse manus.  
effice ne macies pallentes occupet artus,  
neu notet informis candida membra color,  
et quodcumque mali est et quidquid triste timemus,  
in pelagus rapidis evehat amnis aquis.  
sancte, veni, tecumque feras, quicumque saporis,  
quicumque et cantus corpora fessa levant;  
neu iuvenem torque, metuit qui fata puellae  
votaque pro domina vix numeranda facit.*

Be here and drive away sickness from my delicate girl,  
 be here, Phoebus proud with unshorn hair.  
 Trust me, hurry: it will not cause you regret, Phoebus,  
 to have set your healing hands to the shapely girl.  
 Make it so that the thinness does not seize her pale limbs,  
 and no disfiguring color marks her radiant limbs,  
 and whatever there is of the bad and whatever is sorrowful that we fear,  
 let the river with its rapid waters carry them into the sea.  
 Come, holy one, and bring with you whatever tonics,  
 whatever spells lighten tired bodies;  
 do not torment the youth, who fears the fate of his *puella*  
 and makes vows difficult to count on behalf of his girl.

Again, a beautiful *puella* is presented for the reader, and true illness has taken hold. In this case, however, her sickness has the potential to harm her physical beauty, something that the poet-lover hopes to avoid by calling upon Phoebus to heal her. Tränkle has noted how the author of this poem participates within, but also expands the tradition of the sick beloved.<sup>190</sup> In place of the god Jupiter, the narrator beseeches the god Phoebus. As the god of healing, this adaptation signals that her illness may be more serious than that in Propertius, and her physical symptoms reflect this more serious condition.<sup>191</sup> The mention of healing songs (*cantus* at 3.10.10) also has models in other poetry where true illness is implied.

This illness is not intended to highlight the *puella's* beauty. Her illness has progressed to an initial stage that he fears will go further: she has pallid limbs (*pallentes artus*) jeopardized by further emaciation (*macies*) and poor color (*informis color*) threatens to mark her weary limbs (*candida membra*).<sup>192</sup> In this context of true illness, the poet has borrowed terms from the aesthetic paradigm of the lovesick lover to render her sick body. Because of this, the condition of the

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<sup>190</sup> Tränkle (1990) 272.

<sup>191</sup> Tränkle (1990) 272 notes the significance of the presence of Phoebus.

<sup>192</sup> Tränkle (1990) 274 has pointed out the problems with the mixing of the terminology of beauty and sickness, and attributes it to a problem of the text.

*puella*'s ill body is presented in sharp contrast to her beauty. Emaciation (*macies*) and a disfiguring complexion (*informis color*) threaten her normally shapely (*formosa*) body. When applied in proximity to the beauty of the *puella*, these terms are characterized as threatening and as an infirmity to overcome. They are not a marker of her identity, and, as such, the lover begs the assistance of the god to cure her illness. In the case of the lover's body, however, the same symptoms—pallor, a wasted body, and weakness—are mere inconvenient marks of a lover. Although the lover does ask for a cure from love in general, he does not beg relief from these same physical symptoms when he suffers. When applied to the lover's body, these symptoms pose no imminent threat; when they jeopardize the beauty required by the elegiac *puella*, they become destructive.

In this way, the incidence of true illness reinforces the discussion of the paradigms of beauty and lovesickness. The body of each category of elegiac character is marked by the vocabulary associated with the appropriate aesthetic. While the terms associated with the lover's body are inherently negative, they maintain the distance between the subjective lover and the objectified beloved. By creating these two paradigms, the elegist is able to have one foot in the elegiac world and one in the world of traditional convention. These two paradigms secure the lover's place as elegiac lover through the association of physical weakness and dependence on the *puella*. At the same time, his distance from the paradigm of the beloved and objectification rescues his body from being classified as completely effeminate.



### Impotence: another sign of an elegiac lover

Social vulnerability tied to physical dysfunction surfaces in another type of infirmity: the lover's impotence. This affliction on first glance appears appropriate to the image of an effeminized lover: the physical weakness implied in the failing body can be seen to reflect the elegiac lover's conventional deference to traditional paradigms of masculinity. This connection between loss of physical power and loss of masculine status is reflected in the underlying paradigm of Roman male identity. The model of penetration outlined in the previous chapter implies that sexual performance is entangled with questions of a Roman man's masculinity: "a man had either to penetrate or be penetrated."<sup>193</sup> Inability to do one implied the other, along with any effeminacy corresponding to sexual passivity. We see this same association in Greek historical and medical discourse, which marks impotence as an effeminizing affliction. In Herodotus' *Histories*, he tells of the Scythians who pillage a temple of Aphrodite, and, as a result, are punished with the affliction of a "female" disease: impotence.<sup>194</sup> Further, in the Hippocratic text, *Airs, Waters, Places*, these same Scythians, having suffered this affliction due to 'a natural cause', then "do women's work, live like women and talk in the same way..."<sup>195</sup> The Scythians, "judging themselves unmanly...put on female attire, act as women and join with women in their work."<sup>196</sup> Thus, through the inability to perform as a man sexually, they become women in practice and in other spheres of society. Elegy reflects these same concerns to some degree in its narrative, and yet, as with the weakness implied

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<sup>193</sup> McLaren (2007) 4.

<sup>194</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* 1.105. Lloyd (2003) 116 discusses this passage in the context of divine retribution as a cause of illness in the ancient world.

<sup>195</sup> Lloyd (2003) 116 discusses this passage and the attribution of impotence to physiological causes in contrast to that of Herodotus.

<sup>196</sup> Translations from Longrigg (1998).

in lovesickness, the elegists construct the weakness of their *personae* as more than a clear sign of effeminacy.

Ovid presents a relatively explicit rendering of this idea in the narrator's lament over his non-performance.<sup>197</sup> In the midst of three sequential poems emphasizing the lover's failures,<sup>198</sup> Ovid describes the specific strategies the *puella* attempts in an unsuccessful effort to stir her lover. The narrator then provides details of his impotence and its effects on his own status (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.13-20):

*tacta tamen veluti gelida mea membra cicuta  
segnia propositum destituere meum.  
truncus iners iacui, species et inutile pondus,  
et non exactum, corpus an umbra forem.  
quae mihi ventura est, siquidem ventura, senectus,  
cum desit numeris ipsa iuventa suis?  
a, pudet annorum! quo me iuvenemque virumque?  
nec iuvenem nec me sensit amica virum.*

My member, just as if touched by cold hemlock,  
sluggishly abandoned my goal.  
I lay an idle stump, a phony and a useless weight,  
and it was not clear whether I was a body or a shade.  
What kind of old age is in store for me, if indeed it is going to come,  
when youth itself is not adding up to much?  
Oh, the shame of age! In what way was I a youth or a man?  
My girlfriend thought me neither young nor a man.

The lover's impotence is described in metaphorical terms. The influence of cold is a conventional way of describing impotence, and the combination of cold and

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<sup>197</sup> Sharrock (1995) 156 briefly discusses the relative frankness of Ovid in *Amores* 3.7 in comparison to Propertius and Tibullus. For general discussion on elegiac euphemism, see Adams (1982) 224-225 which states that "Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria* are more explicit than other elegy, but both works are lexically inoffensive."

<sup>198</sup> Sharrock (1995) 162 points out the sequence of these poems as evidence that "elegy needs failures." *Amores* 3.6 emphasizes the lover's inability to persuade (all-important to the elegiac lover); 3.7 presents sexual failure, and 3.8 financial poverty. For similar discussion on the elegiac need for failure, see also Wyke (2002) 159 and 176.

poison (*gelida cicuta*) indicates its extent.<sup>199</sup> The use of inanimate objects (*truncus*) and of the immaterial or dead (*species* and *umbra*) to illustrate his affliction further highlights his problem. The narrator uses adjectives that indicate inactivity (*segnia*, *iners*, *inutile*) in order to characterize his own physical sluggishness. This same terminology echoes his rejection of a proper public career,<sup>200</sup> implying that sexual power and masculine status are connected.<sup>201</sup> At best, the lover *seems* to have verified his effeminacy through this description of his defective body; in place of confirmation, however, we then see problematization. Ovid's impotence has made all aspects of his status liminal: is he tangible and living (*corpus*) or an immaterial ghost (*umbra*), is he young (*iuvēnta*) or old (*senectus*), is he a man (*virum*) or...an effeminate male? The final binary is not completed by Ovid, but the implication behind not being a man (*nec...virum*) is being an effeminate male. Physical and sexual weakness are ambiguous here, but this uncertainty aids the lover's delineation of his own identity, as he shifts between these sets of polar terms.

To emphasize the lover's effeminacy, reference to impotence occurs in a limited context: that in which he interacts with the *puella* herself. This circumstance has implications beyond that required by heterosexual activity, however, as the lover's impotence often directly correlates to description of the *puella's* power, which is located in her body (a *forma potens*).<sup>202</sup> Ovid opens his

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<sup>199</sup> Rimell (2006) 203 states that "being frozen is a frequent metaphor for impotence in Latin literature, not least in Ovidian poetry." She also mentions Propertius 1.3 in this context of cold indicating impotence. Putnam (1973) 90 also suggests this in his commentary on Tibullus 1.4.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Propertius 3.7.72, Tibullus 1.1.58, *Amores* 3.8.25. See Sadlek (2004) 24-54 for discussion on the elegiac view that love is not for the lazy.

<sup>201</sup> Williams (2010) 18.

<sup>202</sup> See page 25f. on *forma potens*.

poem centered upon impotence with an *ekphrasis* of those powerful elements of the *puella* (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.1-6):

*at non formosa est, at non bene culta puella,  
at, puto, non votis saepe petita meis.  
hanc tamen in nullos tenui male languidus usus,  
sed iacui pigro crimen onusque toro  
nec potui cupiens, pariter cupiente puella,  
inguinis effeti parte iuvante frui.*

It is not that I think she is not beautiful, and it is not that she is not well dressed, nor is it that she was not often tried by my vows. Nevertheless, limp, I held her for no purpose, but I lay accursed and a burden on the sluggish bed nor, though I wanted too, and with the girl equally desiring it, was I able to enjoy the gratifying part of my feeble groin.

Here the *forma potens* of the *puella*, which is both *formosa* and *bene culta*, is set in direct contrast to Ovid's powerlessness as a lover. The narrator describes his own feeble attempts at love, characterizing himself as *languidus* (limp) and his bed as *pigro* (sluggish). This same disparity of power continues later to emphasize the lover's weakness (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.57-60):

*illa graves potuit quercus adamantaque durum  
surdaque blanditiis saxa movere suis:  
digna movere fuit certe vivosque virosque,  
sed neque tum vixi nec vir, ut ante, fui.*

She is able to move heavy oaks, the hardest steel, and deaf rocks with her flattery: and certainly she was worthy of moving the living and men, but I neither then lived nor was a man, as I had been before.

In describing his impotence, the lover attributes poetic power over inanimate objects to the *puella*.<sup>203</sup> The very objects described entail both her power and the lover's impotence. Not only is she able to move that which should not be easily

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<sup>203</sup> This characterization of the *puella*'s power as poetic is significant, if physical impotence is read metaphorically as reflecting writer's block. For impotence as writer's block in Horace, see Sharrock (1995) 161.

moved—*heavy* oaks (*graves quercus*), *hard* steel (*adamanta durum*), and deaf rocks (*surda saxa*)--but the attribution of hardness or heaviness to each of these objects strengthens her position and highlights the very fact that the lover is not any of these—he's not *gravis*, not *durus*, and not a *saxa*. This is the problem: the lover is soft (*mollis*), an attribute which, while suited for the elegiac lover, is not conducive to being a successful lover.<sup>204</sup> With this softness comes a loss of manhood, as the lover describes himself as no longer living (*neque vixi*) or a man (*vir*). The *puella*'s power is not diminished by the lover's softness—the lover finds no fault with her or her techniques—but his impotence threatens his status as a man to the point that it is compared to a death—a total loss of identity (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.65-66):

*nostra tamen iacuere velut praemortua membra  
turpiter hesterna languidiora rosa,*

nevertheless my member lay there, as if dead  
shamefully more limp than yesterday's rose

The impotence and the softness (*mollitia*) both confirm a degree of effeminacy for the narrator. While this effeminacy compromises the lover's identity from the perspective of normative Roman values, it secures his status as elegiac lover. His status as elegiac lover necessitates his impotence. Impotence not only causes sexual and amatory failure, but can reflect the lover's devotion to the *puella* as well. In an effort to cure his love for Delia, Tibullus attempts an affair with another woman (*aliam*) (Tibullus 1.5.39-42):

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<sup>204</sup> I disagree with Sharrock (1995) 163, who states that “the seductive powers of the *puella* were such as to make hard things soft...but what was needed was to make soft things hard.” This reading, particularly the implication that moving (*movere*) these objects means making them soft, is not supported with the text.

*saepe aliam tenui: sed iam cum gaudia adirem,  
admonuit dominae deseruitque Venus.  
tunc me discedens devotum femina dixit,  
a pudet, et narrat scire nefanda meam.  
non facit hoc verbis, facie tenerisque lacertis  
devovet et flavis nostra puella comis.*

Often I held another: but just when I was reaching pleasure,  
Venus reminded me of my mistress and deserted me.  
Then, leaving, the woman said I was cursed, oh shame,  
and spreads it around that my girl knows unspeakable things.  
Not with words does she accomplish this, but my girl bewitches  
with her face and tender arms and golden locks.

Tibullus similarly experiences impotence in an amatory encounter, although, in this case, the lover's impotence does not result because of the *femina* with whom he suffers this embarrassment. Although Delia is not physically present in this circumstance, Tibullus' weakness as a lover occurs due to the memory of Delia's physicality. Delia is the *puella* who enchants with her face (*facie*), arms (*lacertis*), and locks (*comis*). Her attributes are implied as causes of his impotence, as his inability to perform with the *femina* indicates loyalty to his original *puella*, Delia.<sup>205</sup> Delia's power is his loss. Further, the fact that he has attempted to cure himself of love for Delia many times (*saepe*) links the incidence of impotence to thought for Delia (*admonuit dominae*). Just as his *domina* deserted him (*deseruit*), his ability to perform as a lover has left.

The lover's devotion is one of the key attributes that make him an elegiac lover, rather than just a promiscuous male. He is not a lover of women in general, but a particular *puella*. In those instances when the lover does attempt either to move on from his *puella*, or to commit infidelity, his impotence prevents him from following through. We see this again in Propertius, although he does not describe his impotence in such direct terms (Propertius 4.8.43-48):

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<sup>205</sup> Sharrock (1995) 156 notes this devotion to the "central *puella*."

*sed neque suppletis constabat flamma lucernis,  
reccidit inque suos mensa supina pedes.  
me quoque per talos Venerem quaerente secundam  
semper damnosi subsiluisse canes.  
cantabant surdo, nudabant pectora caeco:  
Lanuvii ad portas, et mihi, totus eram;*

But the flame was unstable, despite a full lamp,  
and the overturned table fell back onto its feet.  
For me seeking a second love by way of dice  
the cursed dogs always turned up.  
The girls were singing, though I was deaf, and laid bare their breasts, while I  
was blind: but for me, I was completely lost at the gates of Lanuvium.

Although Propertius' presentation of sexual matters is more subtle than that of Ovid, the description of impotence is accomplished in much the same vein as the *Amores* passage above; the lover links arousal—evidence of the *puella*'s power—to singing (*cantabant*),<sup>206</sup> and yet again the lover is unable to respond (due to deafness, *surdo*, and blindness, *caeco*).<sup>207</sup> In this case, neither beauty nor singing works, because the lover's thoughts are with Cynthia (*Lanuvii ad portas...totus eram*), whom he thinks is on her way to Lanuvium to celebrate the rites of Juno. His impotence identifies him as a lover of Cynthia through his inability to perform with these other two women. The lover's impotence (at least for Propertius and Tibullus) is linked to devotion to a single *puella*.

The physical weakness and emotional fidelity that occurs in sexual encounters with the *puella* is sufficient to secure the effeminacy that comes with being an elegiac lover. The potential for this liminality, however, is raised in the limited and controlled context of the *puella*, not in that with a rival, peer, or even male beloved. If the elegist wished the elegiac lover to be wholly effeminate, the

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<sup>206</sup> See Rimell (2006) 200-201 on *Amores* 3.6 and the swelling of the river with Ovid's *carmina*; she reads this as a sign of arousal on the part of the river.

<sup>207</sup> Both *Amores* 3.7 and this passage suggest a deeper significance to the lover's desire for a *puella* who possesses talent as well as beauty.

easiest way to accomplish this would be to declare the sexual potency of his rival. While the elegist revels in the effeminacy that is confirmed in the company of women, there is a facet of this discourse on sexual impotency that is aimed at men. McLaren claims that “the history of impotence is perhaps even more about power relations among men” than those with women, as it was men who “traditionally decided what was normal and healthy masculinity.”<sup>208</sup> This notion helps explain why it is acceptable to frame his effeminacy and status as elegiac lover in the context of the *puella*, but not in proximity to or in relations with other adult men. While the power dynamic of the elegiac world is inverted, the elegist still has one eye on the real Roman world. It is acceptable to be weak in this world, but in limited contexts.

In the very same poem in which he had previously declared his sexual weakness, Ovid attempts to break the bonds of elegiac devotion and effeminacy through the *puella*'s accusation that he has been unfaithful. This allegation may imply something rather different from impotence (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.75-80):

*sed postquam nullas consurgere posse per artes  
 immemoremque sui procubuisse videt,  
 'quid me ludis?' ait 'quis te, male sane, iubebat  
 invitum nostro ponere membra toro?  
 aut te traiectis Aeaea venefica lanis  
 devovet, aut alio lassus amore venis.'*

But after she saw that through no arts was I able to rise  
 and that unmindful of her I had stretched out.  
 'Why do you play with me?' she said 'who ordered you, evilly for sure,  
 unwilling to place your limbs on our bed?  
 Either poison-making Aeaea is cursing you with cast wool,  
 or you have come tired out by another love.'

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<sup>208</sup> McLaren (2007) xiv.



After his *puella* has tried her *artes*, she concludes that her lover has either been bewitched or has been unfaithful. In this case, a powerless *puella* may imply a powerful *amator*, as she connects his impotence to success with other girls. He is not necessarily weak or unmanly, but he may be tired. Earlier the Ovidian narrator had suggested that, indeed, his excuse for not performing on this occasion was infidelity, and not witchcraft. In his assertion, the lover rereads his own body to imply not impotence but potency (Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.23-26):

*at nuper bis flava Chlide, ter candida Pitho,  
ter Libas officio continuata meo est;  
exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam,  
me memini numeros sustinuisse novem.*

But only recently blond Chlide twice, and three times radiant Pitho,  
and three times Libas was added to my docket;  
I remember that Corinna compelled from me, in one short night  
that I maintain nine positions.

In a statement that cannot be directed toward the conventional primary addressee, the *puella*, the lover's impotence comes at the end of a long string of affairs.<sup>209</sup> He is not, in fact, powerless, but oversexed. In this way, his impotence signifies not the sluggish or inert male body, but the lover in action. His powerlessness and his unmanliness are replaced with prowess and success in love. He declares his sexual potency to what must be a male addressee, making the question more an issue of masculinity than failure with the *puella*.

There is further attempt at concrete redemption of the terminology tied to the lover's body, as he at times denies the weakness associated with the characteristic emaciation of lovesickness. In the analysis of Propertius 2.22, Karin

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<sup>209</sup> See Sharrock (1995) 170-171 on the relative status and metapoetic significance of these women. She labels Chlide, Pitho, and Libas as Greek prostitutes, while Corinna, a Greek name, "latinises easily and...has in any case already gained elegiac respectability."

Neumeister sees the lover shift from a feeling of discomfort in not being faithful to Cynthia to a certain confidence demonstrated in his declaration of potency.<sup>210</sup> As evidence of sexual power, Neumeister cites the number of women who interest the lover and his use of mythological *exempla* as proof of the lover's newly found sexual prowess.<sup>211</sup> Both of these can read as indicators of sexual success, but the issue of the lover's masculine identity is more complicated than this direct reading can explain. As the lover describes his desire for many *puellae*, he characterizes himself as soft for them all (*mollis in omnis*, 2.22.13). The labeling of his susceptibility as *mollis* is congruent with normative ideas about male promiscuity. While passivity was a sure sign of effeminacy, sexual excess of any kind, even heterosexual, was problematic for masculine identity.<sup>212</sup> Too much success can indicate a lack of self-control, which would push the lover back into an association with effeminacy.

In the end, however, Propertius makes a definite claim for physical prowess, when he denies that his physical stature, or lack thereof, will affect sex with the *puella* (Propertius 2.22.21-24):

*sed tibi si exiles videor tenuatus in artus,  
falleris: haud umquam est culta labore Venus.  
percontere licet: saepe est experta puella  
officium tota nocte valere meum.*

But if I seem to you to have been reduced to scrawny limbs,  
you have been deceived. Hardly ever is Love tended with work.  
The matter stands up to investigation: often my girl has tested whether  
my duty would endure a whole night.

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<sup>210</sup> Neumeister (1983) 70.

<sup>211</sup> Neumeister (1983) 69-70.

<sup>212</sup> Edwards (1993) 65 and 85f. Edwards states that "sexual indulgence of all kinds sapped a man's strength and made him like a woman, unable to take part in public life" (86).

As Propertius argues for his own sexual potency, he states that whoever assumes sexual weakness associated with an elegiac form is deceived (*falleris*).<sup>213</sup> The lover's limbs are thin (*exiles...in artus*), but, inexplicably and despite all arguments of his body as defective, he is not physically (or poetically) puny (*tenuatus*). He assures his audience, specifically his friend Demophoon, that, regardless of physical stature, he is as potent as any, and perhaps more than the average man (*officium tota nocte valere meum*). It is precisely in the context of male interaction that the lover feels the greater need to present evidence of his masculinity. Despite possessing a body with physical imperfection, impotence should not be assumed. Moreover, Ovid, in his authoritative role as *praeceptor amoris*, similarly confirms the elegiac aesthetic and denies that it indicates lack of health or strength, although many think this (*hoc multi non valuisse putant*).<sup>214</sup> This physical condition is appropriate (*decet*) and does not deny strength. The repetition of *valeo* in both Propertius and Ovid indicates some effort to redeem the 'weaker' body using a term reflecting health and strength.

The lover's impotence, therefore, may serve as either a sign of his effeminacy or as proof of his prowess. And yet, even the question of sexual potency can become ambiguous, as it, too, is problematic if associated with too much success. In these instances, both the Propertian and Ovidian lovers run the risk of moving too far toward the other end of the spectrum of potency. While elegiac discourse on impotence works well within the traditional paradigm of the male body, as it reflects an imperfect, infirm body, each lover is able to reconfigure this same effeminate trait to indicate sexual prowess, and thus reflect

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<sup>213</sup> Fedeli (2005) 639-640 supports this reading. He emphasizes that the lover admits his physically thin body, but that Demophoon is deceived about his sexual abilities.

<sup>214</sup> Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.730. Cf. *Amores* 2.10.23 for the same sentiment.

traditional masculinity or even hyper-masculinity. As shown, however, the question of sexual prowess is an area that each lover must navigate carefully.

This problem can even be seen in Priapus, as the model for the Tibullan lover or the average Roman male suffers similar ambiguity.<sup>215</sup> If we recall the discussion in Chapter Two, the god Priapus lends his name to the traditional paradigm of masculinity, that “prime directive of masculine sexual behavior” in which “a self-respecting Roman man must always give the appearance of playing the insertive role in penetrative acts, and not the receptive role.”<sup>216</sup> With this model for sexual behavior, the elegiac lover can claim some small portion of the “hyper-masculine identity” that the god possesses; the god is not only impenetrable, as a figure symbolizing “unflagging virility and potency,” but, as such, “Roman men looked to the figure...as a source of identification.”<sup>217</sup> The lover’s amatory success presented in terms of epic battle can be read as a mirror of the aggression tied to Priapus’ sexual success.

With this extreme, however, comes the opposite term, as this god, known for his prominent erection, was also associated with impotence.<sup>218</sup> The Tibullan lover hints at this impotence in his first interaction with the god as he seeks advice on boys (Tibullus 1.4.1-6). Priapus’ prowess is indicated by the very fact

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<sup>215</sup> See pages 70-74 of Chapter 2 for Priapus as a model.

<sup>216</sup> Williams (2010) 18.

<sup>217</sup> Willaims (2010) 18 and 94 and Holzberg (2005) 368. Also, note that Priapus is a model for the adult male, thus indicating the status of the elegiac lover.

<sup>218</sup> Richlin (1983) 58-59 discusses Priapus’ potential as a figure of both “extreme virility” and as impotent “antihero.” Holzberg (2005) traces this tendency in the *Corpus Priapeorum* and draws parallels with the impotence of the elegiac lover. Also see Parker (1988) 166-169 on *Priapea* 63 and Hooper (1999) 21-22 who states that “Priapus shows his own fears and frustrations too often in the poems [*Priapea*] for us to take his bluff [of punishment through penetration] as meaningful aggression,” indicating that the god is in fact not a symbol of “meaningful aggression” but suffers impotence. Butrica (2000) states that Hooper does not emphasize enough the question of impotence. Cf. also Horace, *Satires* 1.8.1-3, where there is some implication of Priapus being carved from similar materials (through repetition of the terms *truncus* and *inutile*) to those Ovid uses to characterize his impotence in *Amores* 3.7.13-20.

that Tibullus goes to seek advice from him. His role as *praeceptor* assumes success in the question at hand, and Williams calls him the “god par excellence of youthful masculine vigor.”<sup>219</sup> His impotence is hinted at more subtly, as the extremes of both the cold of winter (*hibernae...frigora brumae*) and the time of the Dog Star (*aestivi tempora sicca Canis*) are connected to masculine weakness or impotence.<sup>220</sup> While the god can embody a hyper-masculine sexuality, he is also able to shift to the opposite end of Roman masculinity and become completely powerless. The instability of the sexual prowess of the elegiac lover and his model reflect a similar uncertainty of status inherent within Roman masculinity.

Although there is a degree of loss in the lover’s masculinity with this affliction representing a source of weakness for the lover, ultimately, the significance of this weakness is ambiguous. Whether the lover indicates earlier virility through this later weakness (as in the case of Ovid), or whether the lover’s impotence is due to devotion to the *puella* (as with Tibullus), this infirmity is molded to the character of the elegiac lover. It is at this point that the unique status of the poet-lover becomes relevant: the poet has to fail, in order to maintain his identity as poet-lover. James states that “elegy pretends to want its men and women to be on the same side...but if they were always—or even often—in unison, there would be no elegy. Without the tension supplied by its gendered structure of partnered opposition, elegy collapses.”<sup>221</sup> The poet-lover’s identity as elegiac lover is secured by his (ultimate) failure in the pursuit of love. Alison Sharrock agrees with this sentiment, stating that “the elegist must be

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<sup>219</sup> Williams (2010) 28.

<sup>220</sup> For the effects of the Dog Star and heat on male and female sexual performance, see Cyrino (1995) 54-55 (in Hesiod), 95-96 (in Alkaios), and 104-105.

<sup>221</sup> James (2003) 8.

simultaneously potent and impotent, and that paradox exposes the tensions in the Roman image of masculinity."<sup>222</sup> And, if this impotence suggests his inadequacy as a lover, even when embracing this failure, the lover secures his success as elegiac lover.

### The Elegiac Limp: Moving Beyond the Metaphor

Such literal treatment of the body seen above has received less attention in current scholarship than the use of the body as a metaphor for the difficulty of poetic composition or for the style of poetic verse. In addition to the metapoetic readings of the lovesick and impotent lover's body, Alison Keith has identified the elegiac narrative of "the winning of a difficult woman" as analogous to the poet's difficulty in composing finely crafted poetry, resulting in the appearance of the *puella's* body being similarly treated as the signifier of poetic style.<sup>223</sup> The final aspect of the lover's infirmity—the implications of the poetic metaphor of the elegiac limp for the physical body of the lover—requires a transfer of the poetic flaw from the metaphorical to the literal realm. The point here, however, is not to expand this discussion of the male body as poetic metaphor; instead, I ask what implications this already conventional metaphor of the elegiac limp has for the male body and his identity. Coming from a tradition starting in fifth-century Athens, Roman writers adopt the same "conventional literary vocabulary that metaphorically figures texts and parts of texts as their author's bodies and limbs."<sup>224</sup> This metaphor may seem generic, much like that of the

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<sup>222</sup> Sharrock (1995) 166.

<sup>223</sup> For scholarship on metapoetic significance of the *puella's* and lover's bodies, see fn. 5 and 31 from Chapter One.

<sup>224</sup> Keith (1999) 41.

lovesickness trope, but it may be transferred from the abstract realm to the physical body of the poet-lover, and in this way color his elegiac and masculine identity. To begin, I will first trace the metaphor in its most common version—as it appears on the body of the *puella*—before linking it to the lover’s body. The specific association of the elegiac limp to the lover’s body will uncover one of the key dynamics in Roman elegy, that between the lover and the soldier (as) rival.

For the elegist, the attributes of an appealing female body are the same traits that mark a poem as artistic and sophisticated, those which are appropriate to a poem reflecting Callimachean aesthetics. Both are preferred “without adornment, simple, unsullied by gaudy and expensive ornament.”<sup>225</sup> The *puella*’s body assumes a set of adjectives that are similarly applicable not only to a beautiful seductress, but also to a description of elegiac verse, as may be seen in Ovid’s personification of Elegia (*Amores* 3.1.7-10):

*venit odoratos Elegia nexa capillos,  
et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat.  
forma decens, vestis tenuissima, vultus amantis,  
et pedibus vitium causa decoris erat.*

Elegy came with scented hair bound  
and, I think, one foot was longer than the other.  
A well-formed body, the most delicate of gowns, the face of a lover,  
and the fault in her feet was the source of her elegance.

Maria Wyke has convincingly shown how “everywhere the reader is required to unite these women [*puellae*] with issues of poetic production...”<sup>226</sup> Ovid’s representation of female flesh is not the exception, but rather he makes explicit with his Elegia figure what both Propertius and Tibullus hint at in their

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<sup>225</sup> McNamee (1993) 224.

<sup>226</sup> Wyke (2002) 121.

language. Elegiac *puellae* are intended to represent both the love interest within the narrative of the story, as well as personifications of poetic genre—in the case of *Amores* 3.1, both elegy and tragedy.<sup>227</sup> Just as Elegia wears delicate clothing (*vestis tenuissima*), so the verse of elegy must be finely wrought; just as she is beautiful in form (*forma decens*), so the verse is elegant.<sup>228</sup> And just as Elegia limps (*pes illi longior alter erat*), so the verse she represents has a meter with unequal lines.

Poetic aesthetics and female body appear interchangeable, but it is clear in this instance that the poetic metaphor influences the construction of the body in the case of both Elegia and Tragoedia. Wyke emphasizes the incongruity of bestowing a limp upon Ovid's Elegia, who in all other aspects has been described in ideal terms as a *puella*. Instead of the slight or well-formed foot one might expect on the *puella*, *Elegia* possesses one foot that is longer than the other.<sup>229</sup> The *puella*'s physical limp, which is described as a *vitium* at *Amores* 3.1.10, is an asset (*decor*) when applied to poetic style.<sup>230</sup> Unlike the metaphor of the lovesick or impotent lover, whose physical condition lies within the parameters of narrative expectations of a lover, the *puella*'s limp serves no purpose within the amatory narrative. An imperfect *puella*, however, is not expected or needed outside of concerns for poetic aesthetic. What is perhaps most significant for our purposes is that "the elegiac woman's body has been awkwardly reshaped to serve poetic concerns."<sup>231</sup> The poetic metaphor alters the expected body of the *puella*.

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<sup>227</sup> Wyke (2002) 121.

<sup>228</sup> McNamee (1993) 224 for discussion of the term *forma* and *figura*, which may reference either physical appearance or poetic style.

<sup>229</sup> For a short discussion on the simultaneous association of the word *pes* with both the body and poetic meter, see Hinds (1987) 16-17.

<sup>230</sup> Wyke (2002) 123.

<sup>231</sup> Wyke (2002) 123.



As much as the poet is able to manipulate the body and appearance of the *puella* to conform to his ideal poetic aesthetic, the body of the male is equally malleable. In her discussion of Propertius 2.10, Keith points out how the description of the poet-lover's body is adaptable to poetic context, as the poet-lover Propertius considers undertaking the allegedly more difficult task of composing epic poetry:

"Recognizing the challenge that writing elevated poetry presents to his slender frame, the elegiac speaker envisions failure from the outset...In fact the change of genre requires a concomitant transformation of his physical appearance...Both the new heaviness of the speaker's walk and the new elevation of his demeanor exemplify the more serious poetry he will learn to compose...Only in this way will he become a poet of truly epic proportions..."<sup>232</sup>

Depending upon what genre the poet wants to work in, he may manipulate his poetic body to suit his poetic style. Such adaptations of the male body may be seen in regard to softness, weight, or size. Even within ancient rhetoric, there was a correspondence assumed between the style and content of the poem and the poet himself. This connection is so engrained in discussion of elegiac poetics that Quintilian's "descriptions of the elegists' poetry are in fact formulated as descriptions of the elegists."<sup>233</sup>

In his discussion demonstrating that "meter is never arbitrarily chosen," Morgan makes parallel claims for the correlation of poetics and the poet's body.<sup>234</sup> In his discussion of the usage of choliambic meter in Catullus' travelling poetry, he states that "there is obviously a natural tendency for the associations of a poetic metre to adhere to the subjective voice of the poet which speaks in

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<sup>232</sup> Keith (1999) 53-54.

<sup>233</sup> Keith (1999) 47.

<sup>234</sup> Morgan (2000) 120.

that metre.”<sup>235</sup> In the case of Catullus 31, the choliambic meter—or the “limping iambics”—is appropriate for the difficult journey Catullus undertakes:

“the metre corroborates and reinforces the impression of a man exhausted, physically broken, rendered *lame* by his exertions. The ‘limping iambics’ thus contribute a vivid extra dimension to the poem, sharpening the sense of euphoria to which the poem otherwise gives expression by means of a contrast with the physical exhaustion implied by the poems’ metre.”<sup>236</sup>

In this instance, meter reflects the conditions the *persona* suffers as he travels and the physical consequences of those difficulties. Through the metrics of his poetry, the audience gains a fuller picture of the circumstances surrounding Catullus, as well as his physical condition resulting from this association. These connections may also be transferred to the physical body, so that the body of the subjective poet similarly reflects concerns of poetic composition.

The similarly imperfect meter of the elegiac couplet that “limps” along may be seen to reflect the physical pain and torment experienced by the elegiac lover. As seen in the lovesickness trope, the poet-lover is exhausted, weakened, and sickened by his narrative role as elegiac lover, just as the *persona* of Catullus is within his poem. As is the case with Catullus’ poem, the elegiac meter, with all of its limping imperfections, reflects a flawed poetic subject. The meter reflects the difficulties of the lover, and the explicit rendering of his physical condition confirms this association. In this case, the poet takes on the characteristics of his poetry, both in personality and in physicality.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Morgan (2000) 101 discusses the characterization of choliambics as a “deliberately ‘deformed’ version” of iambic trimeters. The meter’s rhetoric of deformity results from a comparison to this more standard meter. Also Morgan (2000) 102 and fn. 18 specifically references the confusion of the choliambic poet’s, Hipponax, personality with his poetic meter. He also references Ovid, *Amores* 1.1 as an example of a poet’s personality adapting to the meter in which he is writing.

<sup>236</sup> Morgan (2000) 103.

<sup>237</sup> Morgan (2000) 102 discusses the tradition of Hipponax as being physically misshapen as resulting from an association with his choliambic meter.

While there is no explicit indication within the narrative that the poet-lover himself suffers a physical limp that would secure the connection between the metaphor of the elegiac limp and the male body, many scholars have made this connection between the physical gait of the poet and his meter. Keith has pointed to several passages in which “both physical and metrical ‘feet’, offer particularly fertile ground for metaphorical play between the lover’s body and the poet’s text.”<sup>238</sup> These passages include: (Propertius 1.13.5-8)

(Tibullus 1.3.19-20):

*o quotiens ingressus iter mihi tristia dixi  
offensum in porta signa dedisse pedem!*

How often having gone out onto the road I said  
that the foot having stumbled at the gate gave a bleak sign!

(Ovid, *Amores* 1.6.7-8):

*ille per excubias custodum leniter ire  
monstrat, inoffensos derigit ille pedes.*

He shows you how to go through the watch of the guards,  
he sets straight your unstumbling feet.

The physical instability of the lover’s step is seen as a reference to the stumbling (at least in comparison to the dactylic hexameter of epic) that reflects elegiac metrics. The step (*pes* or *gradu*) of the lover either stumbles (*offensum*) or slips (*lapsus*), or in that circumstance in which Cupid helps him, he is prevented from stumbling (*inoffensos derigit*). The clumsiness attributed to the lover’s elegiac

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<sup>238</sup> Keith (1999) 48, 55-56. Other assumed references to meter, through the presence of *pes*, are not directly applicable to a limping poet-lover. She cites Tibullus 1.2.20 and 1.2.35 – examples of silent movement, and another incident of tripping, although not the / a lover, at Tibullus 1.7.62. Also, cf. Tibullus 1.3.92 and 1.5.24 on the *puella*’s naked foot or quick step, and Propertius 3.1.6, where the poet considers which foot he should enter on.

metrics has shifted from the metaphor to the physical body of the lover. The body within the amatory narrative is molded according to the needs of the genre.

While the elegist forms the lover's body in the service of this metaphor, this action says something more about his poetic and masculine status. In the 'real' world of conventional masculinity, such lack of physical control would undoubtedly signal effeminacy, much like the physical weakness associated with lovesickness. Within the elegiac world, however, this clumsiness is positive; it signals not only the values reflected in elegiac meter, but his identity as a specifically elegiac lover. First of all, the stumbling of the lover is directly associated with activities appropriate to his elegiac identity: Propertius associates the slipping of the step (*lapsus abire gradu*, 1.13.8) with the first stages of falling in love with the *puella*, the stage of love where one makes the transition from being a lover to being an elegiac lover; Tibullus marks the stumbling foot (*offensum pedem*) as a reflection of the ill-success of the elegiac lover—it is a sign of the coming doom he will suffer; Ovid uses the now sure step (*inoffensos derigit*) to indicate the divine aid for the lover, but the implication is that without Cupid's aid the lover would stumble, just as Propertius' lover did. One also might consider the stumbling steps of the inebriated lover wandering back to his *puella* after a night out, or the unsure footing that wandering around at night in the dark might entail.<sup>239</sup> Although never explicitly linked to the physical body of the elegiac lover himself, as it is to the *puella's*, the elegiac limp is relevant to his physicality as well.

To move out of the metapoetic and into the amatory narrative, we must look at a case where the poet lays out this connection explicitly with the figure of

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<sup>239</sup> Cf. Propertius 1.3.9-10, for example.

Vulcan. In this passage, Vulcan functions as a point of comparison with the poet-lover, as he argues that he is suitable for his *puella* in the same way Vulcan is for Venus (Ovid, *Amores* 2.17.19-24):

*Vulcani Venus est, quamvis incude relictā  
turpiter obliquo claudicet ille pede.  
carminis hoc ipsum genus impar, sed tamen apte  
iungitur herous cum brevior modo.  
tu quoque me, mea lux, in quaslibet accipe leges;  
te deceat medio iura dedisse foro.*

Vulcan has Venus, despite the fact that when he leaves behind his anvil  
he has a hideously twisted limp.  
This very type of song is lopsided,  
but nevertheless the heroic nicely joins with the shorter measure.  
You also, my light, take me on whatever grounds you want;  
it is proper for you to hand down laws in the middle of the forum.

The connection between physical limp and elegiac meter is explicitly made—only here the body is male. The results may be represented in the following equation: Corinna is to Ovid as Venus is to Vulcan as the hexameter (*herous*) is to the pentameter (*brevior modo*) as epic's dactylic meter is to the elegiac couplet.<sup>240</sup> Bodies once again are compared to poetic metrics, but this explicit connection supports a reevaluation of the programmatic body in terms of a material (and specific) body, even if that of a god. Ovid draws an explicit connection between Vulcan's body and the deficiency of elegy's limping meter to draw a parallel between the god and his elegiac *persona*. The metaphor of the deficient meter is now tied to the particular bodies of Ovid and Vulcan. Furthermore, through Vulcan's position as the pentameter line, Venus occupies that which is *herous*,

<sup>240</sup> Rimell (2006) 77 fn.26, mentions this relationship between terms in her claim that Ovid deliberately establishes a pattern in which the lover "mirrors" the *puella* in order to demonstrate how they "collaps[e] into one" (76). I emphasize the separation of terms here, especially as we move into discussion of Mars as a point of comparison for Vulcan.

reflecting both the submissive nature of the elegiac lover and separating the god even more from a solidly masculine identity.

Just as Venus has Vulcan, Ovid has his Corinna. This direct comparison of the Ovidian lover to the god Vulcan prompts further analysis of an episode in the *Ars Amatoria*. In this passage, the parallel between the elegiac lover and Vulcan is extended to Ovid's students, when the narrator warns them against trying to catch their *puellae* with rivals because it only encourages the affair. To demonstrate this point, he points to the well-known story of the affair of Mars and Venus, who had no need to hide their affair once revealed (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.561-570):

*fabula narratur toto notissima caelo,  
Mulciberis capti Marsque Venusque dolis.  
Mars pater insano Veneris turbatus amore  
de duce terribili factus amator erat.  
nec Venus oranti (neque enim dea mollior ulla est)  
rustica Gradivo difficilisque fuit.  
a, quotiens lasciva pedes risisse mariti  
dicitur et duras igne vel arte manus!  
Marte palam simul est Vulcanum imitata, decebat,  
multaque cum forma gratia mixta fuit.*

A most famous story is told in all the heavens,  
that of Mars and Venus captured by Vulcan's tricks.  
Father Mars disturbed by a maddening passion for Venus  
from a fearsome commander was made a lover.  
And Venus (for there is no goddess easier than her)  
was not slow and unyielding to the Marcher begging.  
Oh, how often it is said that she insolently ridiculed the feet of her  
husband and his hands made hard by fire or craft!  
In Mars' presence she mimicked Vulcan, a thing that was becoming,  
and often charm was mixed together with her form.

The connection of a limp with Ovid's lover-students through this comparison to Vulcan brings to the fore the type of anatomical metaphor seen in both Vulcan and Elegia in the *Amores*. The figure of Vulcan once again brings the limp out of

the realm of the metaphorical into that of the tangible body, as Venus is said to ridicule (*risisse*) her husband's limp (*pedes*). Significantly, despite the physical deficiency and weakness assumed by his limping foot, the god Vulcan is granted a degree of masculine hardness, as his hands are rendered in terms normally reserved for the masculine male, the dominant *puella*, or epic meter: he has the hard hands (*duras manus*) of a craftsman. Markus Janka associates Ovid's description of Venus here with the typical description of an elegiac beloved, as the poet links the passivity (*nec...rustica...difficilisque*), softness (*mollior*), and frivolity (*lasciva*) to Venus.<sup>241</sup> Further, the association of the act of ridicule (with *risisse*), which has been marked as a term specifically relevant for either the elegiac *puella* or Cupid,<sup>242</sup> brings Venus into the submissive role of elegy, drawing attention away from potential effeminacy of Vulcan's limp. Neither Vulcan nor the elegiac lover is wholly redeemed, but, in the face of this hyper-masculine competition (Mars), his status as effeminate male is downplayed, despite his physical infirmity.

### The Allegory of Poetic Genre and Themes

If Vulcan may be seen as an allegorical representation of the genre of elegy due to his limp, Mars can become an embodiment of epic. The association of the gods with poetic genre is strengthened by the connections (made above) of the lover's body and elegiac metrics to Vulcan's body. The soldier is the focus of the type of epic against which the elegist typically pits himself, and Mars, as the god of war, is the archetype of the soldier and thus an appropriate figure to represent

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<sup>241</sup> Janka (1997) 408.

<sup>242</sup> Note the association of *risisse* with Cupid in *Amores* 1.1.3 and *Elegia* (with *surrisit*) in *Amores* 3.1.33.

epic's content. Appropriate to his role as the embodiment of epic, he is named here with the Homeric epithet *Gradivus*, the Marcher.<sup>243</sup> Here, the Marcher reflects that which is not limping elegy: the strong and steady step of epic meter. The use of these contrasting gaits to describe both Mars and Vulcan solidifies their role as narrative and poetic rivals. *Amores* 2.17, in which Vulcan is used to directly characterize the poet and his poetics, further supports the link here of Vulcan and the poet's body to issues beyond narrative content. With this later reference to Ovid as Vulcan (at *Ars Amatoria* 2.561-570), the implications of the Venus-Mars-Vulcan triangle become significant on and beyond a metaphorical level.

The divine rivalry between Vulcan and Mars serves not only as the paradigm of elegiac poetic style and genre, but is also a model for the dynamic of male interaction in elegy.<sup>244</sup> In his study outlining the dynamics of the elegiac love triangle, Gianpiero Rosati claims that the fundamental function of the rival is to be the alter-ego of the protagonist.<sup>245</sup> He states that love is, by necessity, social, because the lover requires a rival to secure sympathy for the poet-lover.<sup>246</sup> For this purpose, elegy creates the rich, greedy, uncouth, and uneducated rival to stand in opposition to everything that the lover proclaims as his own values.<sup>247</sup> We see this system of opposition at play here in the mythological world of Vulcan and Ares, which is transferred to the elegiac world through the

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<sup>243</sup> Janka (1997) 408.

<sup>244</sup> Rosati (2008) 254 identifies Ares as the archetype (*l'archetipo*) of the amatory rival, but does not relate how this specific relationship could function in elegy beyond the parallel of the *dives amator* (Homer's Ares gives gifts to Aphrodite, which secures her affection for the god.) He does not elaborate on the opposition of soldier and craftsman, which is key to my own analysis.

<sup>245</sup> Rosati (2008) 257, 259, and 270. The majority of Rosati's study (pages 261-269) details the way in which the rival ensures the difficulty of the pursuit of love as well as the suspicion and jealousy of the lover, both of which factors keep love alive.

<sup>246</sup> Rosati (2008) 257.

<sup>247</sup> Rosati (2008) 257.



connection of these figures to Ovid's student-lovers. The binary opposition of poetic genre, introduced through the question of the elegiac limp, shifts to a competition on the level of the narrative, with the soldier as both romantic and occupational rival. This dynamic is a straightforward parallel: just as the soldier Mars is a rival to the craftsman Vulcan for Venus' affections, the rival (also often a soldier) contends with the lover (a poet who consistently compares himself to famous craftsmen)<sup>248</sup> for the *puella's* affection. Mars' embodiment as a soldier is significant in this comparison. Considering the elegist's presentation of his *persona* as the embodiment of an effeminized, weak male—and his seeming embrace of this identity—the rivalry with the soldier is not one without basis.<sup>249</sup> He chooses a figure that embodies the ideals of Roman masculinity as his foil. The soldier is the most important rival for the elegist on many levels, in terms of genre and poetic style, seen above, and now within the elegiac narrative. In this love triangle, opposition is key to the interaction of the two male figures. In this instance, the soldier is superior to the infirm craftsman, but as we will see in the next chapter, the elegist is willing to manipulate the body of the soldier to level the playing field.

## Conclusion

Elegiac discourse on the lover's status is fluid, and this flexibility is reflected in the discourse of his infirm body. Through a confusion of the physical and metaphorical body, the elegist manipulates the position and character of all

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<sup>248</sup> For parallel in addition to that of Vulcan, see *Ars Amatoria* 2.12-15 and the comparison between Ovid and Daedalus.

<sup>249</sup> In his analysis of Propertius 1.8, Rosati (2008) 256 notes that the opposition between elegiac poet and soldier was already a cliché borrowed from comedy. He is assuming that the rival in 1.8 is a soldier, although the poem itself does not identify him as one. Rosati does not elaborate further on the significance of having a soldier as a rival in either case.

bodies in his poetry. The description of the lover as physically infirm to some degree embraces the dominant discourse within elegy on the effeminate lover. While these symptoms are commonplace for the lover, they are not neutral. Just as with the *puella*, they do indicate some level of weakness on the part of the lover. He exhibits the symptoms of a sick body and through this body reflects his status as the unsuccessful elegiac lover, thus emphasizing his own subjugation to the *puella's* whims. The sign of an elegiac lover is that which indicates failure, and the symptoms of both lovesickness and impotence present physical evidence for this status.

The conscious application of a metaphorical illness to the body indicates a desire to engage with the consequences of whatever significance that body entails.<sup>250</sup> In spite of this willingness to take on a degree of effeminacy, there is some attempt to compensate for negative implications through the limitation of this weakness to his interaction with *puella*, where it is appropriate to be effeminate. Elsewhere, the sick body is reevaluated and the infirm body is not always weak. Lloyd emphasizes the utility of sickness, as “doctors and health and disease were good to think with—they were the assumed knowns by means of which the unknowns could be apprehended, from political disruption, to madness, to the emotions themselves.”<sup>251</sup> Here, elegy uses illness to construct elegiac identity and to reconfigure how that identity fits into normative Roman masculinity. Elegy expands the familiar symptoms of illness beyond what is

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<sup>250</sup> Caston (2006) 283 discusses Propertius 1.5 as she compares the significance of love as sickness within both elegy and philosophy. Whereas the philosopher regards this condition as something that should be avoided, the elegiac poet-lover sees love as a necessity at the same time as he relishes the harm it causes.

<sup>251</sup> Lloyd (2003) 240.

expected in conventional applications,<sup>252</sup> as it extends the significance of them to impart a particular identity to the elegiac lover specifically tied to these signs of physical sickness. The creation of separate aesthetic paradigms isolates the characteristics appropriate to the beloved and lover, which marks the lover as distinct from the two beloveds. When set in contrast to the perfect body of the beloveds, this sick body emphasizes their desirability, thus furthering the elegiac identities of each.<sup>253</sup> Elegiac discourse transforms physical weakness into something not inferior. At minimum, it is appropriate, and, at times, it is configured as superior to that which might be presented by a more beautiful body.

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<sup>252</sup> Winkler (1990) 71 labels the physical symptoms of lovesickness [audible breathing, sweaty spots on the clothes, a palpitation in the nose, color shifting from pallor to blush, and an overall trembling] as being part of “the social and psychological traits that characterize relations of amicable association (*philia*) and sexual desire (*eros*) in the Mediterranean family of cultures.”

<sup>253</sup> Fredrick (1997) 175 makes a similar argument for Callimachus. He states “the *phthoneros* is characterized internally by ‘wasting and emaciation, pallor and sunken eyes; the frowning brow and gnashing teeth of rage; and perhaps physical distortions such as a hunched back’...A desirable object always stands in opposition to this tortured body.”

## Chapter IV:

### Inviolability and the Wounds of *Militia* and *Militia Amoris*

#### Introduction

Even as the lover assumes aspects of the effeminate body, he establishes a degree of masculinity by reconfiguring those same terms that problematize his masculine status. A similar readjustment occurs in the context of physical vulnerability, when the elegiac lover employs the trope of *militia amoris* (military service of love).<sup>254</sup> Through elegy's comparison of the soldier's war wounds and the lover's amatory wounds, we can detect a rhetorical interest in redefining elegiac weakness through the same manipulation of the terms of effeminacy and masculinity. The desire to claim comparability with the soldier's body endangers the lover's conventional claim of being inviolate, at the same time as it secures the lover's respectability through the dangers of "warfare." In contrast to this treatment of the soldier's body, where the lover is interested in fashioning himself as a peer to the traditional soldier, both Tibullus and Ovid engage with the soldier's body outside of the context of *militia amoris*. When assessing the soldier's body in absolute terms, the elegist redraws the boundaries of normative

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<sup>254</sup> For a short history of the use of military language in descriptions of love before Roman elegy, see Murgatroyd (1975) 59-67. The use of *militia amoris* becomes more pointed with Roman elegy than it had been in previous literary traditions. It was not uncommon for love to be compared to warfare, but with Roman elegy love is contrasted with "real war" (60, 76-77). This adaptation of the trope marks the rivalry between the poet-lover and the soldier as more relevant to Roman society in general.

masculinity in his reassessment of the very markers that should ensure the soldier's masculine status: his scars resulting from battle.

To explore this dynamic between the real and the metaphorical wound, it is necessary first to locate the soldier within the paradigm of more traditional texts promoting conventional masculine values, in order to ground elegy's paradigm and determine where it deviates from the conventional. The literary discourse of late Republican and early Imperial historiography and epic often employs the soldier as an *exemplum* of Roman masculinity, and his battle scars serve as symbols of his respectability. It is this type of wound—the one securing honor and status—that the poet-lover adopts in his description of the amatory wounds of *militia amoris*. Outside of this context, however, we do not see mere repetition of conventional masculinity, and the place of the soldier's body in this system is more complicated than might be expected. With elegy's declared, although insincere, deference toward occupations and values marked as traditional or respectable, as well as the frequent and self-conscious identification of the poet-lover as effeminate, one might assume that the soldier would occupy a high status in this genre as well, at least superficially. If the elegist wished to replicate the patterns set out in the conventional literary discourse on masculinity, it would be a logical transference to borrow from these genres the positive discourse on the soldier and structure the lover's effeminate identity in response to this set of ideals. But in this context of male interaction, the lover's rejection of a wholly effeminate status is most apparent.

Through the wounds of *militia* and *militia amoris*, the lover is able to interact directly with the soldier as a peer in terms of the body. The appropriation of military terminology and imagery to describe a private amatory

affair has been interpreted as a way for the lover to elevate his own activities to the status of the soldier's.<sup>255</sup> The poet-lover must first contend with conventional discourse and position himself within it to assert a "claim of respectability" within elegiac discourse, before he is able to reorganize the traditional through its own values.<sup>256</sup> It is through a comparison of this trope implying equivalence and the physical sign of the scar that we see the power of adaptability for the poet-lover and the potential weaknesses of the traditional masculine figure. The same signs marking the soldier's body in history or philosophy hold different significance in elegy. And while the soldier's identity is fundamentally linked to the implications of his physical wounds, the lover is able to remove himself from any potential problems that physical violability entails. The poet-lover takes full advantage of this flexibility, as he appropriates the honor associated with the risks of war wounds at the same time as he proclaims the physical inviolability of being a sacrosanct lover. The lover's masculinity is thus doubly secured, while he destabilizes that of the soldier.

### The Discourse on War Wounds in History, Philosophy, and Epic

Late Republican and early Imperial discourse generally promotes the occupations of the public sphere—the orator, the politician, and the soldier—as representative of normative Roman values.<sup>257</sup> McDonnell explicitly links

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<sup>255</sup> Gale (1997) argues that the lover elevates his own status to that of the soldier through this metaphor, but then undermines his status through the irony of his arguments for an elegiac life. DeBrohun (2003) 27-28 and 83 briefly acknowledges that love and the poet-lover are "revalued" through the use of *militia amoris*, which serves as a "third term" that negotiates elegy's "rigid oppositions."

<sup>256</sup> Gale (1997) 79.

<sup>257</sup> Sadlek (2004) 32. He discusses the Stoic view of appropriate masculine activity, where "'the life in the sun' was the aristocratic ideal of public service, an exposed life of exertion and possible danger, the life of an orator or soldier."

questions of Roman masculinity to these very occupations, stating that “the bond between the form of the state and the status of being a man was closer and more essential in Rome than in others, because in Rome, serving the Republic was the only way many Romans males could lay claim to being a man.”<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, it was a common school task to debate whether the life of a lawyer or of a soldier was more praiseworthy, the basic question of which exercise points to the commonly accepted high social status of either occupation.<sup>259</sup> Narrowing this definition further, Walters indicates that the soldier was key to Roman masculinity, claiming that “central to the concept of Roman manhood was the image of the Roman soldier, the citizen in arms.”<sup>260</sup> All of these assessments of Roman social hierarchy attribute a higher social status and a corresponding higher degree of masculinity to those serving in the public sphere, and particularly to the soldier figure.

To a large extent, Rome’s normative gender dynamic was formulated from the degree of “perceived bodily integrity and freedom, or the lack of it, from invasion from the outside.”<sup>261</sup> Both social status and one’s status as a male control the extent of physical violability; the lower one’s status, the more penetrable an individual’s body was thought to be. In terms of this question of violability, the treatment of the soldier’s body introduces a paradox for his masculine status, but the scar resecures and even strengthens his position.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> McDonnell (2006) 11.

<sup>259</sup> McKeown (1995) 298. He cites Quintilian *Inst.* 2.4.24 (*iurisperiti an militaris viri laus maior*) and Cicero *Pro Murena* 22. When comparing the relative virtues of the soldier and the lawyer, Cicero claimed that the virtue of military service stood out above all others (*rei militaris virtus praestat ceteris omnibus*).

<sup>260</sup> Walters (1997) 40. Also see Edwards (1997) 71.

<sup>261</sup> Walters (1997) 30.

<sup>262</sup> Walters (1997) 40. Also see Loraux (1997) 100 who also notes the paradoxical nature of the wound in Greek epic, where it illustrates “the shifting state of the masculine: vulnerable-

While the soldier is “symbol of all that is manly in Roman society,” his occupation involves the potential for physical violation through beatings by a superior officer or wounding by the enemy: “a man can without losing his superior status be penetrated by a sword or a vine, but not by a penis or a birch.”<sup>263</sup> The physical penetration of corporal punishment marks the soldier as “dangerously like the slave, that ever-present, unmanly inferior and outsider.”<sup>264</sup> As Baroin points out, both the slave and soldier suffer wounds and scars, which act as more than a physical feature (*caractéristique physique*)—they serve as an identifying sign (*signe identitaire*).<sup>265</sup> The scar, however, which stands as physical proof of the physical violation of a body, is not treated the same in all cases:

“...les cicatrices et les pratiques qui leur sont associées mettent en place différents corps, qui correspondent à des statuts sociaux différents et à des sphères culturelles différentes; les cicatrices ne sont pas identiques d’un corps à l’autre.”<sup>266</sup>

...the scars and practices associated with them put in place different bodies, which correspond to different social statuses and different cultural spheres; the scars are not identical from one body to the other.

Although physically similar, the social significance of wounds and scars is dependent upon the context of the scar. The same signifier can indicate different messages about the body. The placement of the scar is indicative of status, and as an identifying sign is subject to interpretation (“...la cicatrice se voit et c’est un signe que l’on interprète”).<sup>267</sup> The slave is associated primarily with scars located

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invulnerable, wounded but intact, strong for being able to welcome the flaw within but...triumphant for having conquered weakness, the body indomitable and delicate.”

<sup>263</sup> Walters (1997) 40.

<sup>264</sup> Walters (1997) 40 states that the military service of the soldier also destabilizes his status as a full male, in that he is subject to the *imperium* of their commanding officer in the same way that a slave is subject to his master or a son to the *paterfamilias*. For similar, see Leigh (2004) 178 n. 89 and 183.

<sup>265</sup> Baroin (2002) 33-42.

<sup>266</sup> Baroin (2002) 28.

<sup>267</sup> Baroin (2002) 32.



on the back, and sometimes the face, while those of the soldier are located on the chest.<sup>268</sup> The soldier's sexual impenetrability and the strict guidelines surrounding corporal punishment distinguish his body from that of the slave, but the final confirmation of the soldier's status comes from the significance behind the violability he does suffer. Traditional discourse resolves the question of the soldier's liminality through its association of the wounds received in combat with heroism.

Scars on the chest are indicative of all the virtues associated with the successful soldier, including both personal courage and devotion to the fatherland, as well as indications of ancestor's nobility and service to the state.<sup>269</sup> Combat wounds are normally not considered dishonorable; they are not judged as shameful or disfiguring.<sup>270</sup> Such scars act as lasting evidence of a soldier's success in battle and mark him permanently as a soldier.<sup>271</sup> Livy provides evidence of the scar's significance when he introduces an old soldier who has fallen into slavery due to debt. Until he reveals his battle scars, this soldier is unrecognizable due to the pallor, malnourishment, and filth of his life as a slave (Livy 2.23.4 and 2.23.7):<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Baroin (2002) 35. The slave with scars on the back is the negative model to the soldier and his wounds received in combat.

<sup>269</sup> Baroin (2002) 35-39. Also see Phang (2008) 47-48 for discussion on the ideal soldier and his motivation of "public honor" and competition for his leader's approval (not profit).

<sup>270</sup> Walters (1997) 40 and Baroin (2002) 43-45. While the scars of the soldier are not dishonorable, Baroin indicates that the level of scarring can't be excessive. Also, scarring on the face is negative, even if received in battle. She states that the integrity of the face is essential for the citizen acting as politician or orator.

<sup>271</sup> Leigh (1995) 207-209 links display to *imagines*, as he argues that the "ideologically-charged physical realism" of these *imagines* likely reflects a "tendency to admire the marked, modified, worked body," and that scars would be within the repertoire of meaning for Late Republican aristocrats. Scars also stand in for *imagines* for the lower classes. Just as the aristocrats gain identity from the *imagines*, others gain status through the display of scars. Also see Milne (2009) 30.

<sup>272</sup> Baroin (2002) 35f; also Leigh (1995) 209 discusses this passage to illustrate the scar as the evidence used by the soldier to protest his decline.

*obsita erat squalore vestis, foedior corporis habitus pallore ac macie perempti; ad hoc promissa barba et capilli efferaverant speciem oris. noscitabatur tamen in tanta deformitate, et ordines duxisse aiebant, aliaque militiae decora volgo miserantes eum iactabant; ipse testes honestarum aliquot locis pugarum cicatrices adverso pectore ostentabat.*

*...Inde ostentare tergum foedum recentibus vestigiis verberum. Ad haec visa auditaque clamor ingens oritur. Non iam foro se tumultus tenet, sed passim totam urbem pervadit.*

His clothing was covered in filth, the condition of his body was more foul, as it was deformed by pallor and malnourishment; in addition to this, his overgrown beard and hair made his face appear wild. He was recognized despite such deformity, and it was said that he had been a centurion, and openly pitying him they were speaking of other honors of military service; he himself was showing scars on the front of his chest as evidence in several places of honorable battles.

...Then he displayed his back befouled by recent traces of lashings. As soon as these marks were seen and heard of a huge clamor arose. And the commotion did not contain itself in the forum, but it permeated everywhere throughout the whole city.

The recognition of the old soldier in spite of his current poverty (*noscitabatur...in tanta deformitate*) and the crowd's reaction to the scars suffered as a slave (*tergum...recentibus vestigiis verberum*) demonstrate the significance of the soldier's scar as a sign of social distinction. The standard pairing of honorability (*honestus*) and directionality (from the front [*adversus*]) designates the soldier's scar as a positive sign of his identity, while the scars of slavery positioned on his back (*tergum*) are marked as shameful (*foedum*).<sup>273</sup> The soldier's battle scars serve as enduring proof (*testes*) of his status and his identity is further marked by the showing (*ostentabat*) of scars; both the signifier and the revelation of the scar

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<sup>273</sup> Baroin (2002) 35-36. She contrasts the wounds on the chest as being markers of the old man's status as a soldier, with all its associations with glory and honor, to the later description of scars on his back from beatings (from his creditors), which indicate something completely different, as they are dishonorable and thus not even suited to a Roman citizen, much less a soldier.

demonstrate correlation of the scar to one's identity as a soldier.<sup>274</sup> Furthermore, the pairing of these scars with other honors (*aliaque militiae decora*) indicates that, in this case, scars from battle are not a shameful violation of the body, but a symbol of valor. These marks stand in stark contrast to the negative scars of slavery that the soldier has more recently suffered. It is the very incongruity of the two categories of scar that causes the disturbance of the crowd. The battle scar alludes to a status greater than current physical circumstances indicate, while the slave's scars indicate decline not deserved by the soldier.

The importance of wounds and scars for securing identity can be seen again in Seneca, as he connects the soldier's status to the relative exposure to danger and suffering (Seneca, *De Providentia* 4.4).<sup>275</sup>

*auda est periculi uirtus et quo tendat, non quid passura sit cogitat, quoniam etiam quod passura est gloriae pars est. militares uiri gloriantur uulneribus, laeti fluentem meliori casu sanguinem ostendant: idem licet fecerint qui integri reuertuntur ex acie, magis spectatur qui saucius redit.*

Virtue longs for danger and thinks about wherever it is pointed, not what it is going to suffer, since even what it will suffer is part of glory. Soldiers take pride in their wounds and happily show off the blood flowing for a better reason. Granted, those who return from battle unhurt also fought, but whoever returns wounded is deemed greater.

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<sup>274</sup> Baroin (2002) 35-43. She states that the difference between the soldier's scars and those of a slave are that the soldier displays his scars as evidence of his service and status. The slave doesn't need to display his scars, because, as a slave, scars are a given (43). Also see Leigh (1995) 205-209 who calls the scar "a mark of authentication, a thing to be displayed and observed." Salazar (2000) 216-218 discusses the display of wounds as a common topos throughout Greek and Roman literature, including history, philosophy, and poetry. She notes, however, that the scar's role "as proof of courage" is strictly Roman. She attributes this to a greater emphasis on "beauty and perfection" among the Greeks than the Romans, stating that "the pride in one's scars, even if they were disfiguring, figures well with the idea of Roman hardiness..." (218).

<sup>275</sup> Leigh (1995) 205f and Milne (2009) 30 use this passage to discuss the significance of scars. My discussion of display of war wounds owes much to both; the translation, however, is my own, and I expand upon the treatment of this passage by both. While Seneca writes after the period of the elegists, his passage indicates a continued literary tradition in characterizing the soldier's scar as a positive marker of status.

Here, the pursuit of *virtus*<sup>276</sup> and *gloria* is directly linked to encounters with danger (*periculi*) and suffering (*passura*), as well as the marks resulting from these encounters.<sup>277</sup> Wounds are sources of glory and status. The soldiers not only express pride in their wounds, but a wounded soldier is considered to be greater than other soldiers who return from battle unwounded (*magis spectatur qui saucius redit*). Engagement in battle grants one status as a respectable Roman man, but those who return without wounds—without evidence of their courage or skill—are suspect.<sup>278</sup> The number of scars correlates to a soldier's status on the battlefield and the degree of courage displayed there.<sup>279</sup> It is the wounding, not the fighting, that ensures highest status: the scar is a "mode of evaluation," which grants the soldier status and helps him rise above the masses after battle.<sup>280</sup> In this specific context and with a degree of competition implied, physical violability secures a status quite different from initial appearance: these violations push the soldier's identity into the hypermasculine.<sup>281</sup> His wounding goes beyond mere exposure to risk to symbolize his victory after a battle. The context of those wounds and the motive behind them negate any effeminacy connected to potential physical violability. Physical wounds and the scars that

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<sup>276</sup> Moore (1989) 5 states that, prior to the second century B. C., the term *virtus* is directly linked to those serving in the public sphere, specifically indicating "excellence shown in serving the state, especially the courage and endurance of an ideal soldier." He says that Livy's usage of *virtus* is mostly in accordance with this meaning, and that he rarely uses it to indicate "virtue" or "moral excellence" (from the Greek *arête*). Also see McDonnell (2006) 9 on *virtus* and development of meaning from the martial/public sphere. Despite the later time period and genre, Seneca's connection of danger and glory to the term warrants comparison.

<sup>277</sup> See Milne (2009) 30-31 for discussion specifically on the connection of danger and suffering to glory, as well as the connection of the scar to the idea of a "bloodless victory."

<sup>278</sup> See Leigh (1995) 198 on doubt that arises when a soldier returns from battle with "an unmarked body."

<sup>279</sup> Leigh (1995) 196 points out that Valerius Maximus (3.2.24), Pliny the Elder (7.101ff), and Aulus Gellius (*N A* 2.11.1ff) all judge L. Siccus Dentatus as the "most valiant ever warrior" due to the number of scars he has. He also notes Propertius 2.1.44 as evidence demonstrating the soldier's tendency to count wounds.

<sup>280</sup> Leigh (1995) 197.

<sup>281</sup> Walters (1997) 40 states that a soldier's wounds are "the polar opposite of scars from a servile beating."

result are the soldier's "mark of manhood, the signifier, permanently inscribed on his body, of his social status as a full man."<sup>282</sup>

Scars are the visible reminder of status that the soldier can carry with him off of the battlefield. Not only can scars distinguish a soldier from other soldiers as seen above, but they possess significance and confer higher status on the political stage as well. At the end of his argument in favor of granting L. Aemilius Paullus a triumph for defeating Perseus of Macedon, Livy's Marcus Servilius turns to his own body as further indication of authority over his opponent, Servius Galba (Livy 45.39.16):<sup>283</sup>

*ille nihil praeterquam loqui, et <id> ipsum maledice ac maligne, didicit; ego ter et uiciens cum hoste ex prouocatione pugnaui; ex omnibus, cum quibus manum conserui spolia rettuli; insigne corpus honestis cicatricibus, omnibus aduerso corpore exceptis, habeo.' nudasse deinde se dicitur, et quo quaeque bello uulnera accepta essent rettulisse.*

He has learned nothing except to speak, and to do that with abuse and malice. I met the enemy twenty-three times; from all with whom I engaged I took away spoils. I have a body distinguished with its honorable scars, with each taken from the front." He is said to have stripped himself then and to have reported which wounds had been received in which war.

In a speech that presents action as worth more than words, Marcus Servilius indicates that battle provides evidence of one's honor and subsequent status. Both the taking of spoils and the number of confrontations serve as an indicator of superior skill, but it is the scar that permanently marks the soldier's honor. Furthermore these wounds, both honorable (*honestis*) and received from the front (*aduerso corpore*), color the meaning of his entire body, as his whole body is distinguished (*insigne*) because of these wounds. His subsequent display of these scars mark them as proof of his social authority off of the battlefield, as they

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<sup>282</sup> Walters (1997) 40.

<sup>283</sup> See Milne (2009) 31-32 for her discussion of this passage.

grant him “political currency.”<sup>284</sup> Later in his speech (Livy 45.39.18-19),<sup>285</sup> Marcus Servilius further undermines Servius Galba’s position when he claims that the former military tribune has none of his own scars to display. Instead, he designates Galba’s body as *nitens* and *integrum*, which both imply effeminacy in the face of Marcus Servilius’ own scarred body. In this opposition of the wounded, yet hypermasculine, body to the whole (*integer*), yet effeminate, body, we see the power of the scar to grant status.

A comparable capacity of the soldier’s wound to elevate a figure above others in battle also occurs in epic discourse. Unlike the wounds above, however, epic wounds do not confer status, but reflect it. The characters we encounter in the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid* are heroes: their statuses are not advanced by being wounded, but instead their reactions to wounding reflect their place in a hierarchy of heroic peers.<sup>286</sup> As such, although wounding is equally symbolic, there is not the same focus on display and confirmation of masculine identity through the acknowledgement of this sign of manhood by others. Instead, the wounding itself reveals to the reader something more of the hero’s character than battle rage and boasting does—it reveals his nature at a more fundamental level.<sup>287</sup> Such scenes go beyond the interest of narration to that of

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<sup>284</sup> Milne (2009) 31-32. Also see Salazar (2000) 217 citing Plutarch, *Coriolanus* 14.1-2, who states that it was “an alleged custom for candidates for the consulship to go to the Forum wearing their toga but no tunic—for the purpose of showing their battle scars...”; Baroin (2002) 35-42; Phang (2008) 47-48 notes scars as symbols of each soldier’s *virtus* and a politician’s “legitimacy.”

<sup>285</sup> ...*nec magis me eius quam cicatricum harum pudet paenitetque, quando numquam mihi impedimento ad rem publicam bene gerendam domi militiaeque fuit. Ego hoc ferro saepe vexatum corpus vetus miles aduluscentibus militibus ostendi: Galba nitens et integrum denudet.*

<sup>286</sup> Salazar (2000) 147-155 establishes a hierarchy of heroism within the *Iliad* based on the varying reactions to wounds displayed by various heroes. The reaction of both Thersites (147) and the gods, Aphrodite and Ares, (157-159) to wounding highlight the heroism of the mortal heroes.

<sup>287</sup> Salazar (2000) 146f. discusses how wounding reveals the hero’s state of mind.

characterization, as wounding scenes offered a way of presenting the hero's courage and endurance.<sup>288</sup>

Being open to physical wounding exposes the body to violation, but the hero's reaction to the violation interrupts any potential effeminacy resulting from that physical penetration. We can see this in Aeneas' courage and endurance in the face of his wounding by an unknown assailant.<sup>289</sup> Despite being caught unaware, his concerns remain with the action on the battlefield rather than his own physical wound, which is serious enough to require divine aid (Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.387-390):

*saevit et infracta luctatur harundine telum  
eripere auxilioque viam, quae proxima, poscit:  
ense secent lato vulnus telique latebram  
rescindant penitus, seseque in bella remittant.*

He raged and struggled to rip out the arrow by the broken shaft  
and demanded the way which was closest for help:  
that they cut the wound with a wide sword and deeply cut back  
the location of the arrow, and send him back to battle.

Aeneas' sole goal is the removal of the arrow, which he even tries to remove himself, so that he may be sent back to the battlefield (*seseque in bella remittant*). Salazar points out that Aeneas' "fortitude" is illustrated, as even in the midst of concerned comrades and his weeping son (*maerentis Iuli*), the hero remains focused (*lacrimis immobilis*) on battle,<sup>290</sup> a circumstance that also highlights his own position above all his allies (12.398-400). Moreover, after Venus has cured his wound and he has rearmed for battle, Aeneas marks his own actions in the

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<sup>288</sup> Salazar (2000) 126. For similar argument, see Loraux (1997) Chapter 5.

<sup>289</sup> For the actual wounding, see *Aeneid* 12.318-325; for Aeneas' reaction, see *Aeneid* 12.383-440.

<sup>290</sup> Salazar (2000) 223-24 also mentions the fact that Aeneas remains standing during treatment as a sign of courage and strength.

midst of physical hardship as the proper model for his son (Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.435-440):

*“disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,  
fortunam ex aliis. Nunc te mea dextera bello  
defensum dabit et magna inter praemia ducet.  
tu facito, mox cum matura adoleverit aetas,  
sis memor et te animo repetentem exempla tuorum  
et pater Aeneas et avunculus excitet Hector.”*

“Learn, boy, virtue and true labor from me,  
and luck from others. Now my right hand will give  
you to battle defended and lead you among great prizes.  
Be sure, when soon your mature age has reached adulthood,  
that you are mindful and, when in your heart you seek exemplars  
of your relatives, let your father Aeneas and uncle Hector stir you.”

Iulus is to have learned manliness (*virtutem*) and endurance (*laborem*) from Aeneas' wounding. Meeting the challenge of physical pain and possible death in a way appropriate to his position indicates heroic status. This physical violation underscores Aeneas' standing as epic hero, but, furthermore, denotes his position above others. As was the case in historical and philosophical discourse, epic uses wounding to reinforce the higher status of the individual wounded. Aeneas' identification of himself and the hero Hector as the best exemplars (*exempla*) for his son not only raises him above the other heroes of the *Aeneid*, but also grants him a status equal to that of Hector. The particular relationship between sign and referent differs slightly in epic, where the wound declares status or reflects it, from that seen above in Livy and Seneca, where the wound grants status. In both cases, the overall meaning behind this physical violation is not problematic for male identity.



### The Lover's Inviolable Body and his Amatory Wounds

In one of the elegiac lover's more overt assertions of masculine status, his claim to inviolability and his use of *militia amoris* directly address these aspects of normative masculine discourse that assure elevated status for both the average male citizen and the soldier. In place of a lover consistently associated with softness (*mollitia*), which evokes neither security from physical attack nor any of the respectability or strength of a soldier, the elegiac lover mitigates some of the effeminacy that his relationship with the *puella* requires. By claiming that he cannot be violated by passersby in the night, the lover asserts the status of a fully adult male, a position that, while not ambiguous, he goes on to problematize by suggesting potential for attack. In turn, by employing *militia amoris*, the lover generally gains a degree of respectability through the use of the trope that indicates the "equal validity" of the poet-lover with a "more conventionally respectable career," as the terms of *militia amoris* bring lover and soldier to a state of equivalence.<sup>291</sup> Both discourses grant the poet-lover the opportunity to redefine the rhetoric behind his body.

While the lover's declaration of being physically invulnerable is not significantly emphasized or often repeated throughout the elegiac corpus, it is a conventional *topos* borrowed from Hellenistic poetry.<sup>292</sup> As in its literary models, this declaration most often comes when the narrator relates the dangers involved

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<sup>291</sup> Gale (1997) 79. Also see DeBrohun (2003) 27-28 and 83.

<sup>292</sup> Fedeli (1985) 500 notes the parallels in Philodemus *AP* 5.25 and Posidippus *AP* 5.231.3-4. For detailed comparison of the emotional valence of this convention in Propertius, Tibullus, Ovid, and Horace, see Ruhl (2000) 165-179. Each elegist has a poem claiming protection from harm. Cf. Propertius 3.16, Tibullus 1.2, Ovid, *Amores* 1.6, and [Tibullus 3.9]. Both Tibullus 1.2 and Ovid *Amores* 1.6 tie this inviolability specifically to the *paraclausithyron*; the lover in Propertius 3.16 has been summoned by the *puella*. [Tibullus 3.9] is the only example not tied at all to evening activities—it mentions Amor as a guard while Cerinthus hunts.

in being a lover who, in his amatory activities, must travel at night to see his *puella*. Despite some anxiety about these dangers, the lovers declare themselves inviolate. In her study, Maria Ruhl attempts to differentiate between those areas where the lover demonstrates more sincere anxiety and those in which he simply employs poetic convention in a more impersonal way.<sup>293</sup> In place of this question of sincerity, my focus will be to demonstrate that the lover's status as sacrosanct originates specifically from his role as poet-lover. With this claim, the elegiac poet-lover engages directly with normative values of inviolability.

In the Propertian treatment of the convention, the lover is summoned by the *puella* to visit her at night. The lover must go, because he otherwise will face the closed door and wrath of the *puella*. The invitation, nonetheless, gives rise to a dilemma of whether the evening will be safe (3.16.5-6). The conclusion is that the roads are secure for him, because, as a lover, he travels under the protection of Venus and Amor (Propertius 3.16.11-20):

*nec tamen est quisquam sacros qui laedat amantes;  
 Scironis media quis licet ire via.  
 quisquis amator erit, Scythicis licet ambulet oris,  
 nemo adeo ut feriat barbarus esse volet.  
 sanguine tam parvo quis enim spargatur amantis  
 improbus? ecce suis it comes ipsa Venus;  
 luna ministrat iter; demonstrant astra salebras;  
 ipse Amor accensas concutit ante faces;  
 saeva canum rabies morsus avertit hiantes:  
 huic generi quovis tempore tuta via est.*

Nevertheless there is not anyone who would injure sacred lovers;  
 who are allowed to go down the middle of the Sciron's road.  
 Whoever will be a lover, it is allowed that he walk on the Scythian shores,  
 no one will want to be so barbarous that he would strike him.

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<sup>293</sup> Ruhl (2000) 177-179 finds Propertius' version to be less personal than that of the other poet-lovers also claiming sacrosanctity. She states that Propertius' version is far more stylized and reflects more consciously his status as *poeta doctus* than that of his poetic peers.

For what wicked man would be spattered by the so scant blood of a lover?  
 Behold, Venus herself goes with them as companion;  
 the moon shows the way; the stars clearly point out the potholes;  
 Love himself shakes the burning torches before;  
 the fierce rage of dogs turns away its gaping bites:  
 for this sort at any time at all the way is safe.

Protection is generally extended to anyone who would be a lover (*quisquis amator*) against any foe (*quisquam*), both mythological (Sciron) and political (the Scythians).<sup>294</sup> Significantly, the inviolability that comes with the sacred (*sacros*) status of a lover as well as the protection of both Venus and Amor is accompanied by reference to the lover's pallor (*sanguine tam parvo*), which would be conventionally seen as weakness. The assailant who attacks a man in such a state would be wicked, but to ensure safety he has the gods, the moon, and the stars to escort him. This protection and guidance is limited specifically to lovers, who are singled out as a specific category (*generi*) among men.

The Tibullan lover likewise has no reason for his fear when he wanders out in the darkness to seek the *puella* (Tibullus 1.2.25-32):

*en ego cum tenebris tota vagor anxius urbe,*  
 . . . . .<sup>295</sup>  
*nec sinit occurrat quisquam qui corpora ferro*  
*vulneret aut rapta praemia veste petat.*  
*quisquis amore tenetur, eat tutusque sacerque*  
*qualibet; insidias non timuisse decet.*  
*non mihi pigra nocent hibernae frigora noctis,*  
*non mihi cum multa decidit imber aqua.*  
*non labor hic laedit, reseret modo Delia postes*  
*et vocet ad digiti me taciturna sonum.*

<sup>294</sup> Ruhl (2000) 172 argues that Propertius, by making concrete (with specific reference to Sciron and the Scythians) what Tibullus in 1.2 makes general (through *qualibet* and *insidiae*) depersonalizes the experience and, instead, indicates his status as *poeta doctus*.

<sup>295</sup> A line of the text is not recoverable in the MSS tradition. Putnam (1973) 65 states that the line would mention the safety of the lover. Maltby (2002) 162 indicates that claims of Venus' protection would be present here.

Behold when I wander anxious through the whole city in the darkness,  
. . . . .  
and she does not allow anyone to come upon me who might wound me  
with iron or who would seek the booty of stolen clothing.  
Whoever is held by love, he would go safe and sacred  
wherever he wants; he should not fear ambushes.  
Neither does the sluggish cold of winter nights harm to me  
nor does the rainshower fall on me with much water.  
This labor does not harm me, if only silent Delia unlocks the doors  
and the sound of her finger summons me.

Once again, it is exclusively lovers (*quisquis amore tenetur*) who are assured safety in nightly outings. The lack of specificity for potential assailants (*quisquam*), the verbal construction *non timuisse decet*, and the unrestricted connotation of *qualibet* all guarantee that lovers need not fear attack at any time. Despite the safety of his person, the possibility of wounding (as shown with *anxius* and *occurrat quisquam*) in this context still lends a degree of fidelity and courage to the lover's character in this elegiac context. And despite his inviolability, the lover lays claim to the bravery tied to military engagement; the lover fears wounding (*vulneret*) by iron (*ferro*) and his clothing serves as potential booty (*praemia*).<sup>296</sup> The adoption of risk reflected in the terminology of real warfare (*militia*) mimics the honor and courage represented by a Roman soldier's wounds.<sup>297</sup> Just like the soldier, the lover gains status through his motivation and the risk entailed in that devotion. Further, the harshness of the weather suffered by the lover has been tied to the endurance required by the soldier, as has his *labor* (line 31).<sup>298</sup> Even in a context claiming invulnerability, the poet-lover appropriates the traditional

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<sup>296</sup> Maltby (2002) 162 notes the connection to military terms here.

<sup>297</sup> Putnam (1973) 65 points out that the "fearless, elegiac lover is...a humorous contradiction of terms."

<sup>298</sup> Maltby (2002) 163. Putnam (1973) 65 ties these trials to the *exclusus amator*.

heroic association with the soldier's wounds and hardships in his application of this metaphor to his pursuit of love.

In other applications of this comparison of military warfare to the pursuit of love, the lover's amatory wounds are described as an affliction that begins with the wounding of the physical body from an outside source. The sharp edges of Cupid's weapons metaphorically penetrate the body of the lover, just as a soldier's body is literally penetrated.<sup>299</sup> And in some instances these wounds are (hyperbolically) fatal to the weapon's victim (Propertius 2.9.37-40):

*nunc, quoniam ista tibi placuit sententia, cedam:  
tela, precor, pueri, promite acuta magis,  
figite certantes atque hanc mihi solvite vitam.  
sanguis erit vobis maxima palma meus.*

Now, since this decision is final for you, I yield:  
I pray, boys, that you send forth weapons more sharp,  
competing thrust them home and take this life from me.  
My blood will be the greatest victory for you.

The description of the cupids' weapons in terms of sharpness (*acuta* and *figite*), as well as the implication that these metaphorical weapons may draw blood, indicates an element of physical injury to the lover. In addition, amatory wounds have a similar element of physicality in their healing. As Propertius declares himself cured of his love of Cynthia, he describes the healing process (Propertius 3.24.9-18):<sup>300</sup>

*haec ego nunc ferro, nunc igne coactus, et ipsa  
naufragus Aegaea verba loquebar aqua.  
correptus saevo Veneris torrebam aëno;  
vinctus eram versas in mea terga manus.  
quod mihi non patrii poterant avertere amici,*

<sup>299</sup> Cf. Propertius 2.12; Tibullus 2.1.71-72; Ovid, *Amores* 1.2.7, 2.9.13-14, 2.12 (bloodless victory), *Ars Amatoria* 1.169, 1.236, 2.708.

<sup>300</sup> Heyworth's text (seen here) places lines 9-10 after 11-14.

*eludere aut vasto Thessala saga mari.  
ecce coronatae portum tetigere carinae;  
traiectae Syrtes, ancora iacta mihi est.  
nunc demum vasto fessi resipiscimus aestu,  
vulneraque ad sanum nunc coiere mea.*

Compelled now with iron, and even now compelled by fire,  
and shipwrecked I spoke words of her on the Aegean sea.  
Snatched away I was burned in the fierce cauldron of Venus;  
I was bound with my hands behind my back.  
A thing which neither family friends were able to turn away from me,  
nor the Thessalian witches were able to wash away in the wide sea.  
Behold, the garlanded ship has touched port;  
the sandbanks have been passed, and my anchor has been lowered.  
Now at last tired by the insatiable heat I am myself again,  
and my wounds have now come together to health.

The lover undergoes iron and fire and suffers shipwreck and Venus' divine fire to cure his love for the *puella*. The modes of healing include those elements that may have been used in ancient medicine (*ferro and igno* have been interpreted to indicate the knife and cautery),<sup>301</sup> as well as superstitious methods (Venus' fire and witchcraft). Although it is not clear what ultimately cured him, the healing of his wounds is described in terms appropriate for a physical wound, as it closes and heals (*ad sanum...coiere*). Fedeli notes that Propertius deliberately chooses to use the medical terminology, *ad sanum...coiere*, to close the metaphor of his lovesickness.<sup>302</sup> The implication is that his metaphorical wound was a true hardship. The healing of the wound indicates the end of suffering and the power of the *puella* over him, thus serving as a sign of the lover's masculinity just as it did for the soldier. Although invisible, the lover's scar is a sign of vulnerability overcome.

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<sup>301</sup> Richardson (1977) 441 disagrees that this means cautery, due to the presence of *coactus*. Either way it implies the use of physical elements to cure a metaphorical wound.

<sup>302</sup> Fedeli (1985) 686 connects the use of these terms to *Thes.* III 1419.11-31 and Cels. 8.5.4.

There are, however, those few instances in which the metaphor is applied to true wounds suffered by the lover in his pursuit. The imagery previously used to describe wounds reflecting the lover's suffering is transformed to indicate the lover's pleasure and success. In one such incident, the lover's treatment of his real amatory wounds brings his occupation even closer to that of the idealized soldier of traditional discourse. Having had a brawl (*rixa*, 3.8.1) with the *puella* the night before, the lover invites similar sessions of battle and the injuries they bring (Propertius 3.8.21-22 and 29-34):

*in morso aequales videant mea vulnera collo:  
me doceat livor mecum habuisse meam.*

.....

*dulcior ignis erat Paridi, cum Graia per arma  
Tyndaridi poterat gaudia ferre suae:  
dum vincunt Danai, dum restat Dardanus Hector,  
ille Helenae in gremio maxima bella gerit.  
aut tecum aut pro te mihi cum rivalibus arma  
semper erunt: in te pax mihi nulla placet.*

Let my peers see my wounds on my bitten neck:  
let my bruise indicate that I had my girl with me.

.....

The flame was sweeter for Paris, when amidst Greek arms  
he was able to bring pleasures to the daughter of Tyndareus:  
while the Greeks conquered, while Dardanian Hector resisted,  
he waged the greatest battles in the lap of Helen.  
Either with you or with rivals for your sake, for me  
there will always be battles: no peace with you is pleasing to me.

The wounds here are simple bite marks on the neck, but the lover displays them in a way that is reminiscent of the soldiers of Livy or Seneca.<sup>303</sup> The wounds and

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<sup>303</sup> Cf. Propertius 4.8. For a reading of 4.8 as a display of scars similar to that of the soldiers, see Raucci (2004) 154. I disagree with Raucci's reading, for, while the lover of 4.8 in a sense displays these wounds to his outside reader by describing them, they are in the end a marker of Cynthia's triumph (they are her spoils *exuviis*, 4.8.63) and the lover's weakness. The poet-lover of 3.8

bruises are signs of his success, and he plans to exhibit these to his peers and rivals to lay claim to his status as lover. Just like the war wounds of the soldier, these marks will distinguish him among his amatory colleagues. A few lines later, the lover continues to raise his encounter with his *puella* from mere brawl to an epic battle through a juxtaposition of his amatory struggle with Paris' encounters with Helen. The lover's pursuit of the *puella* is elevated by both traditional display and the association of his activity with epic warfare.

Wounds, therefore, are markers of the risk involved in the occupation of the lover, just as they were for the soldier. In assuming the vulnerability of the physical manifestations of the soldier's wound the lover also gains the benefits of the traditional significance behind that wound. The elevation of status that comes with this connection to traditional views of the soldier outweighs the risks of a metaphorical disruption of the lover's conventional sacrosanctity. The use of *militia amoris* and the characterization of the poet-lover as a soldier of love push the personal poetry of a lover into the sphere of public discourse, which establishes a comparability with the conventional occupations of that sphere (orator, politician, and soldier).<sup>304</sup> Both the lover's occupation and his very physicality become equal to that of a traditionally respected figure of masculinity, thus minimizing some of the lover's effeminacy.

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indicates that his wounds are signs to display to his amatory rivals as a sign of success, which circumstance makes my example in 3.8 a closer parallel to what we see in Livy. When the scar is revealed within the narrative, display reveals an element of competition and elevated status.

<sup>304</sup> Greene (1998) 41.



### Elegy's Reanalysis of the Soldier's Wound

Outside of the trope of *militia amoris*, however, elegiac discourse does not replicate the positive assessment of the soldier's wound seen in Livy, Seneca or Virgil, nor does it configure the soldier himself as a fixed symbol of masculinity. The elegiac poet-lover engages with the traditional view of the soldier and his markers, but not to the extent of harming his own masculine identity or promoting that of the soldier's. The wound still serves as a sign in elegy, and even as a sign of masculinity, but the specific meaning of that sign differs depending on the individual afflicted. Both lover and soldier suffer wounds; elegiac values, however, justify a reconfiguration of the value attached to the soldier's war wound.

Much like the genres discussed above, elegy also notes the scar's role as a signifier of the soldier's identity. In a *recusatio* explaining why he is unable to honor Augustus' victories, Propertius outlines the particular domains of various occupations as support for his refusal to write praise poetry (Propertius 2.1.43-46):<sup>305</sup>

*navita de ventis, de tauris narrat arator;  
enumerat miles vulnera, pastor oves;  
nos contra angusto versamus proelia lecto:  
qua pote quisque, in ea conterat arte diem.*

The sailor tells about winds, the ploughman about bulls;  
the soldier counts his wounds, while the shepherd his sheep;  
I spin out my verses of battles in my narrow bed:  
let each spend his day in whatever art each is able.

The poet's own profession receives slight elaboration through mention of Callimachean poetic values in the narrowness (*angusto*) of his bed and reference

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<sup>305</sup> Cf. Propertius 3.11.1-8.

to the topic of love affairs (*proelia lecto*). In his characterization of the occupations of the sailor, ploughman, soldier, and shepherd, the poet essentializes each with their most basic component: the winds, bulls, wounds, and sheep.<sup>306</sup> As a sailor has knowledge of winds, a ploughman of bulls, and a shepherd of sheep, the soldier understands wounds. When considered in the context of Roman historical discourse, his association of the soldier with wounds is logical. The scar still serves as the “soldier’s symbol”<sup>307</sup> within elegy, although the more positive implications of the soldier’s scar for declaring superior masculine status are not indicated in this passage. In fact, there is comparability between soldier and lover through the potential comparison of the lover’s *proelia* and the soldier’s *vulnera* gained in battle. The potential discrepancy of status between soldier and lover does not appear explicitly here.

More often the soldier and lover are set in direct opposition, and that rivalry is often expressed through the lover’s poetic rant against war and his claim that love is a better pursuit. Both of these elegiac proclamations have been interpreted as either an attempt to set up an alternative to traditional pursuits or a discreet display of anti-Augustan sentiments.<sup>308</sup> My position is that the lover’s prejudice does not derive from Augustus the policy-maker, but rather from the soldier as booty-seeker.<sup>309</sup> La Penna, in his analysis of Propertius 3.5, also argues

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<sup>306</sup> Also cf. Propertius 3.11.5-6, where the sailor and soldier are once again tied to these elements of their profession.

<sup>307</sup> Milne (2009) 30.

<sup>308</sup> For general arguments against the anti-Augustan/pro-Augustan question, see Kennedy (1992) and Gale (1997); for the argument that the question must be asked, see Heyworth (2007) 93-95.

<sup>309</sup> See Maleuvre (1998) 249-254, who ties the accusations of greed and prostitution against the *puella* and soldier in *Amores* 3.8 to Augustus himself. To argue this position, Maleuvre proposes an allegorical reading of the soldier and *puella*, and claims that Corinna’s values can represent ‘Rome’ and Augustus (249). I find the allegorical approach faulty, because, as an embodiment of elegy, the *puella* often stands in direct opposition to the normative values Augustus’ policies attempt to restore. Furthermore, the assumed connection of Augustus with war (and thus the soldier) does not consider that Augustus was also a figure of peace.

that the poet does not direct criticism against a policy of conquest and expansion (*una politica di conquiste e di espansione*).<sup>310</sup> This sentiment can be expanded to other poems on war, where Augustus' motives for engaging in foreign wars are not critiqued in political terms or in terms of governmental policy, even if this at times interferes with the lover's elegiac pursuits (as with Propertius' rejection of marriage in 2.7). Much of the lover's criticism is overwhelmingly centered on the personal motives of the soldier and his desire to gain wealth from such campaigns.

Elegy's criticism of the soldier's greed is emphasized in a complementary pair of poems contrasting war and love, Propertius 3.4 and 3.5. The juxtaposition of these two poems, one declaring that the god Caesar plans a war and the other naming Amor as the god of peace, has been read as a critique of war in general.<sup>311</sup> After foretelling of victory against the Parthians, the lover, in Propertius 3.4, introduces a scene in which he and his *puella* enjoy Augustus' military triumph resulting from this victory (3.4.11-20). Instead of glorification, however, Lefèvre sees irony in the poet's description of the triumph that he watches from the lap of his beloved. Lefèvre argues that the combination of the lover sitting idly on the sidelines and the soldiers marching indicates that the narrator does not value the soldiers' life, and that this criticism extends even to his statement that the soldiers deserve their rewards for battle.<sup>312</sup> While there is an ironic juxtaposition of values demonstrated in the scene of the triumph, I argue that this does not

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<sup>310</sup> La Penne (1977) 70 interprets Propertius 3.5 as the promotion of an alternative lifestyle and not outright political opposition.

<sup>311</sup> For such arguments, see Stahl (1985) 192-204. Some have read 3.4 and 3.5 as a single unit; for this discussion see Camps (1985) 69; Richardson (1977) 330 states that it is better to treat Propertius 3.4 and 3.5 as "separate but complementary;" Heyworth and Morwood (2011) 133 argue against them being read as one unit, since they treat separate questions: one the Parthian expedition, the other Propertius' future.

<sup>312</sup> Lefèvre (1966) 150.

extend to political criticism in this particular poem. In 3.4, Propertius promotes ideas of *Romanitas*, as war is glorified as a means of avenging the death of Crassus and correcting the errors of Roman history (Propertius 3.4.9-10). War itself is never outright condemned.<sup>313</sup> The elegiac lover's alternative values do not entail complete opposition to everything traditional and Roman.

I agree with Lefèvre's statement that the poet has problems with the motives of the soldier, but I argue that this problem is not raised until Propertius 3.5. The primary problem appears to be the rewards that come with war. In Propertius 3.4, the booty secured in battle is the soldier's reward for their service, and it has been earned through their toil (*meruere labores*, 3.4.21). This wealth, not war itself, is the term that is reevaluated in the next poem, where we see Propertius define the values of lover and soldier as polar opposites (Propertius 3.5.13-18):

*haud ullas portabis opes Acherontis ad undas;  
 nudus in inferna, stulte, vehere rate.  
 victor cum victo pariter miscetur in umbris:  
 consule cum Mario, capte Jugurtha, sedes;  
 Lydus Dulichio non distat Croesus ab Iro.  
 optima mors carpta quae venit ante die.*

You will carry no riches at all to the waves of Acheron;  
 you will be carried, fool, naked on a ferry of the underworld.  
 The victor mingles equally with the conquered among the shades:  
 you, captive Jugurtha, sit alongside the consul Marius.  
 Lydian Croesus is not far from Irus of Dulichium:  
 the best death is that which comes with the day already plucked.

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<sup>313</sup> Murgatroyd (1975) 77 acknowledges the greedy soldier as a point of contrast for the poet-lover, but he interprets the passage (as well as others) as a general objection to war and a proposal of elegy's "alternative" lifestyle. This interpretation is not inaccurate, although its focus is broad. I direct my analysis to the specific aspect of war that Propertius critiques here: the soldier and his greed.

The poet-lover devalues the soldier's motivations for engaging in warfare, as he identifies the pursuit of wealth as the soldier's main concern despite its ultimate futility. Wealth does not distinguish the victor from the conquered, and enemies (Jugurtha and Marius) mingle in the underworld, a condition that illustrates the emptiness of the soldier's pursuit of wealth. In contrast, the poet-lover possesses a heart free from desire for hateful gold (*nec tamen inuiso pectus mihi carpitur auro*, 3.5.5). In keeping with the characterization of the lover as an impoverished poet, then, the elegist denies any interest in wealth, as he casts accusations of greed against the soldier. The lover's lack of wealth is set in contrast to the soldier's pursuit of it in war. Engaging in battle for the purpose of securing wealth will not distinguish the soldier.<sup>314</sup> It does not secure him honor in life, and certainly no praise from the elegiac poet. The epic notion of death in battle is not truly the best death,<sup>315</sup> but death is best when one has truly lived (*optima mors, carpta quae venit ante die*, 3.5.18).

This rejection of wealth and of heroic identity and immortality secured through the booty gained in battle undercuts the values set forth in epic poetry, as epic ideals of heroic identity are intertwined with accusations of greed.<sup>316</sup> Alone, these views may be seen as mere reproduction of elegiac concerns: elegy's pursuit of love is better than the wars of epic, a dynamic reflected in the comparison of poet-lover and Augustan soldier. When the elegist maps these

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<sup>314</sup> Here, the poet-lover sets up an opposing paradigm of values that reveals the falsehoods of the heroic life and death.

<sup>315</sup> See Salazar (2000) 131-132 on the good death in epic. She states that "it is important to die a hero, not because it gives the dying warrior himself much satisfaction or comfort, but because of what will be said about him after his death—because the *klea andron* is the only thing that survives after a man's death, and being remembered by future generations in tales or songs is the only way to transcend mortality."

<sup>316</sup> It is logical that the elegiac poet, not depending on another to secure his own immortality, would not value war as a way to do so. At their core, then, the goals of the epic hero and elegiac poet-lover are the same, but they reach the same point through differing routes

sentiments onto the soldier's body, however, he transforms this conventional elegiac criticism into a statement about masculinity. The place where these two issues—greed and the body—converge in elegy is the wound of the soldier. In this evaluation reflecting a redefined significance behind the wound, the soldier does not serve as a symbol of normative masculinity.

We see this criticism set out in Tibullus' first poem, where the narrator introduces a comparison of his own contentment in his occupation as farmer and the soldier's pursuit of glory and spoils. Although the narrator concedes that his choice of lifestyle could be seen as an irresponsible alternative to more traditional pursuits, he claims that life in the countryside is both safer and more relaxed (*segnis inersque*, 1.1.58) than that of the soldier who faces the enemy in battle. In spite of the narrator's own assertions of his weaknesses, Claude Rambaux reads Tibullus' desire for the Roman countryside in this particular poem not as a wish to escape from the reality of his duties as a Roman citizen or the hard service of a Roman soldier.<sup>317</sup> Instead, he sees a partial conflict in the narrator's withdrawal, as the narrator turns from one idealized lifestyle to another that also requires manual labor, the life of a farmer.<sup>318</sup> With this choice, Rambaux argues, the narrator distances himself from the *mores* of greed and personal heroism tied to the civil wars to pursue a still uncorrupted ideal.<sup>319</sup> In my examination of the same poem, I extend this condemnation directed at the greed of the soldier to his body. Similar to Rambaux's argument that the lover condemns the soldier through the terms of normative values, I demonstrate how the lover

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<sup>317</sup> Rambaux (1997).

<sup>318</sup> Rambaux (1997) 10.

<sup>319</sup> Rambaux (1997) 10-11.

problematizes the motives behind the soldier's military pursuits through traditional ideals about greed.

The lover's rejection of wealth is not surprising, given the nature of his identity as an impoverished poet. What is noteworthy is the characterization of the soldier by the Tibullan poet-lover (Tibullus 1.1.75-78):

*hic ego dux milesque bonus: vos, signa tubaeque,  
ite procul, cupidis vulnera ferte viris,  
ferre et opes: ego composito securus acervo  
dites despiciam despiciamque famem.*

Here I am a good leader and soldier: you, standards and trumpets,  
go far off, carry wounds to those greedy men,  
and carry riches: I unconcerned with my stockpile  
I will despise riches and will look down on hunger.

Although the phrase *ego dux milesque bonus* suggests a status as a potential peer of the soldier, the narrator draws a definite line between himself and the military soldier in the very next line. The lover is a soldier, but not the kind of soldier deserving of wounds. Not only do wounds belong to those soldiers who follow standards and trumpets, but the soldiers' motives are further devalued by their characterization as *cupidus*. This adjective, more appropriate to the lover's world than the soldier's, corrupts the traditional paradigm of the soldier and his honorable wounds. Not only are these soldiers greedy, but they deserve their wounds because of their reasons for going to war.

A more complex rendering of this same sentiment occurs in Ovid, *Amores* 3.8. This poem places the poet-lover in direct competition with a soldier-rival, a dynamic that many have approached to illustrate either the poetic or economic impotence of the narrator.<sup>320</sup> Such analyses do uncover the basic components of

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<sup>320</sup> Weinlich (1999) connects both concerns in her analysis. Stroh (1971) 153-154 reads this poem as an adaptation of the *paraclausithyron*, in which Ovid exaggerates the poet's ineffectiveness by

the poem: elegy's standard criticisms concerning the *puella*'s greed and the inability of the poet-lover to compete with the rival's wealth. In lamenting this failure, the poet-lover complains that his *ingenium* and pursuit of *ingenuas artes* are not deemed as valuable as the wealth the rival can offer (Ovid, *Amores* 3.8.1-10):

*et quisquam ingenuas etiam nunc suspicit artes  
aut tenerum dotes carmen habere putat?  
ingenium quondam fuerat pretiosius auro,  
et nunc barbaria est grandis habere nihil.  
cum pulchre dominae nostri placuere libelli,  
quo licuit libris, non licet ire mihi;  
cum bene laudavit, laudato ianua clausa est:  
turpiter huc illuc ingeniosus eo.  
ecce recens dives parto per vulnera censu  
praefertur nobis sanguine pastus eques.*

Does anyone now even look up to the honorable arts  
or think that a delicate song is worth several dowries?  
Once talent was more precious than gold,  
but now it is gross barbarism to have nothing.  
Although my little books have pleased my pretty mistress,  
I am not allowed to go where my books were permitted;  
although she praised me, the door is closed to the one praised:  
Though talented, I go here and there in misery.  
Behold a man newly rich with wealth born through wounds,  
a knight nourished by blood is preferred to me.

The opening of this poem is not unexpected. Lack of appreciation for the lover's poetry and competition with the *dives amator* marks the discourse as elegiac; these are the economic realities behind elegy.<sup>321</sup> The poet goes on to critique the greed of not only the *puella*, who is drawn to the rival by his wealth, but also the rival, who as a soldier accumulated his wealth in war. Again, this criticism of

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making it more realistic with hyperbolic accusations against a real rival. Greene (1994) argues that the poet condemns the mercantile nature of love, because he cannot participate. Alternatively, Maleuvre (1998) does not consider the condition of the poet, but reads the poem as a condemnation of Augustus and the *mores* of the times.

<sup>321</sup> On the economics behind the greedy girl, the wealthy rival, and the impoverished poet, see James (2003) 39-107. James argument is that the *puella* requires income and that the lover is unreasonable to expect her to survive on poetry alone.



war and wealth accumulated from war is not uncommon in elegy, as it is the basis of the conventional criticisms employed within elegy's discourse.<sup>322</sup> It is not talent, personality, prestige, family, politics, or even, significantly, a lover's body that motivates the *puella's* choice, but his money.

I expand the standard observations on the poet-lover's lack of power (outlined above) to the unique avenue of criticism that he employs to condemn his rival. In this poem, the lover is disadvantaged, but I argue that he compensates for this lack by questioning the soldier's masculinity. By associating the soldier's greed and the violence that nourishes that greed with the soldier's body and its actions, Ovid exaggerates the standard lamentation against the greedy *puella* and rival, thus making it more effective and problematic for the soldier figure<sup>323</sup> (Ovid, *Amores* 3.8.11-24):

*hunc potes amplecti formosis, vita, lacertis?  
huius in amplexu, vita, iacere potes?  
si nescis, caput hoc galeam portare solebat,  
ense latus cinctum, quod tibi servit, erat;  
laeva manus, cui nunc serum male convenit aurum,  
scuta tulit; dextram tange, cruenta fuit.  
qua perit aliquis, potes hanc contingere dextram?  
heu, ubi mollities pectoris illa tui?  
cerne cicatrices, veteris vestigia pugnae:  
quaesitum est illi corpore, quicquid habet.  
forsitan et quotiens hominem iugulaverit ille  
indiket: hoc fassas tangis, avara, manus?  
ille ego Musarum purus Phoebique sacerdos  
ad rigidas canto carmen inane fores.*

How, my life, can you embrace him with your beautiful arms?  
How, dear life, are you able to lie in his embrace?  
In case you didn't know, his head used to carry a helmet,

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<sup>322</sup> Cf. Propertius 3.12.5-6, 3.20.3-4; Tibullus 1.1.76. For the conventional accusation of greed by the poet-lover against the soldier (or merchant or sailor), see Baker (1968) 333, 337, and 341 (in reference to 4.1.89-97).

<sup>323</sup> Stroh (1971) 149-154 notes the tendency of Ovid to expand and exaggerate the conventions of elegy in his poems.

and his side, which now serves you, was girt with a sword;  
 his left hand, for which the lately given ring is hardly suitable,  
 carried shields; touch his right—it was gory.  
 Are you able to take hold of this hand by which someone died?  
 Alas, where is the former tenderness of your heart?  
 Notice his scars, the tracks of an old battle:  
 whatever he has was sought for him with that body.  
 Perhaps he might even disclose how often he cut someone's throat:  
 though greedy, do you touch hands admitting to this?  
 But I, the famous pure priest of the Muses and Phoebus,  
 sing my vain song at stiff doors.

Ovid directs the reader from that which is expected to an association of this greed with the soldier's body and the subsequent negative evaluation of that hyper-masculine body. As the lover assesses the soldier's body, he reads it through the filter of the elegiac paradigm. In a scene reminiscent of an objectifying *ekphrasis* of the *puella's* body, the body of the soldier is subject to the lover's gaze as it is dissected bit by bit. It is the soldier's arms, his side, and his hands that most particularly disgust the poet-lover; these parts which held the most significant role in the violence of warfare also have a direct connection to the amorous activity that interests elegy. In this way, the lover's aversion is perhaps expected.<sup>324</sup> Not only are the soldier's head, hands, and side directly linked to violence, through their connection to standard armaments, but the description of his body quickly shifts from description of armor, which in itself makes the soldier's body unsuitable for love, to the direct association of his body

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<sup>324</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.713-716 where the narrator asks Briseis if she was pleased with Achilles' hands imbued with Phrygian blood. King (1987) 173 interprets the intersection of epic hero and lover as something more accepted by Ovid, as she mentions *Ars Amatoria* 2.711-716 as an example of Ovid "[seeing] the roles of soldier and lover as quite compatible: hands that are expert in battle during the day should be equally expert at night..." In *Amores* 3.8 and *Ars Amatoria* 2, however, Ovid draws a clear line between his hands and those of the soldier. Also cf. Tibullus 1.10 where cruel hands should carry a shield and stake; Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 1.693 where Ovid declares that Achilles should hold the shield not a skein.

with the violence of those tools.<sup>325</sup> His hand, which the *puella* now holds, was once covered in blood and served as the dealer of death to another. The metaphorical “love is war” becomes much more literal as the poet draws the connection between the violence of military battle and the means with which one conducts the battle of love. The soldier’s body and the history of his body are incongruous with his amorous pursuits, and, because of this, the poet-lover’s clever metaphor of *militia amoris* is disrupted as the two converge in the single figure of the soldier. The lover adopts terminology from the public sphere of war, but when the soldier transgresses the boundary between public and private what the reader sees is *amor militiae*. This topic has no place in amatory poetry—or with the *domina*, if one reads her as a metaphorical embodiment of elegy itself.

Even within conventional discourse on masculinity, Ovid’s presentation of the soldier’s body and the implications of his associations problematize the soldier’s status. Maleuvre argues that the phrase *sanguine pastus* indicates that the soldier of 3.8 is fattened (*engraisse*) from the blood of another, and suggests that the blood spilled is that of the soldier’s fellow countrymen in civil war, a circumstance that explains why the soldier is characterized as a murderer rather than a hero.<sup>326</sup> It is not necessary, however, to speculate about whether civil war was the particular venue in which the soldier gained his wealth in order to

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<sup>325</sup> Alston (1998) 218-219 states that “uncontrolled violence was savage and no part of the aristocratic image of the *vir*.” Even within normative Roman values, violence in the hand of soldiers is interpreted as “thuggery” by elites. Although the elites administered violence in their homes and this freedom was considered “a marker of the free man,” the soldier associated with acts of violence was deemed a “beast” by elites. Phang (2008) 46-49 addresses the leaders’ concern to separate the more uncivilized motivations of battle, including *ira* and *ferocia*, from those more appropriate for the Roman soldier, including *virtus*, *animus*, and *impetus*. She states that there was “a thin line [that] separated *animus* and *impetus* from *ira* (anger) or *ferocia* (rage),” and that “imperial soldiers had to be dissociated from *furor*, *ferocia*, [and] *feritas*,” all terms associated with barbarians and not appropriate for Roman soldiers.

<sup>326</sup> Maleuvre (1998) 250.

explain the tone of the Ovidian narrator's criticism. The fault lies in the soldier's motives for battle: instead of serving his fatherland, he serves his own interests. This sentiment is developed further, as the poet-lover shifts from the enemy's blood to that of the soldier's own through mention of his scars. These wounds are explicitly characterized in terms that are not comparable to positive discourse on soldiers and wounds. Within the value system of this poem, the soldier's wounds do not represent action in defense of the state or to gain valor, but instead to secure wealth. The soldier is newly rich with wealth born through wounds (*recens dives parto per vulnera censu*). The soldier's motives for these actions no longer redeem the violability of his body, but condemn him as effeminate.<sup>327</sup> As seen within the normative meaning behind scars, the penetration of the physical body is deemed acceptable, and even positive, only in the limited context of service to the state. This interest in battle for the purpose of personal gain, and not for the benefit of the state, effeminize the soldier. Edward's discussion of why luxuriousness is labeled as feminine may be applied to questions of the greedy soldier as well:

"The diversion of wealth to private ends, instead of its use for the public good, is a recurring concern of Roman moralizing...it was seen as a particularly feminine characteristic to value private concerns over the good of the state."<sup>328</sup>

The distinction between concerns for either the private or public sphere is "one of the principal binary oppositions through which gender distinctions are articulated."<sup>329</sup> Edwards further states that "whatever qualities were undesirable

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<sup>327</sup> Cf. also Catullus 29 and 57, where the soldier, greed, and accusations of effeminacy similarly intersect in the figures of Mamurra and Caesar.

<sup>328</sup> Edwards (1993) 80.

<sup>329</sup> Edwards (1993) 80.

in a male member of the Roman elite were termed 'feminine.'<sup>330</sup> Greed can be placed in that category of undesirable qualities.<sup>331</sup>

The soldier's wounds and scars further undermine his status through Ovid's explicit connection of this recent wealth to the actions of his body. Through this criticism of the soldier's body, Ovid pushes the soldier over the imaginary boundary of the impenetrable, respectable, and masculine, into the territory of the prostitute and others who use their bodies for profit, including gladiators and actors, and other *infames*.<sup>332</sup> Whatever he has was sought with that body (*quaesitum est illi corpore, quicquid habet*).<sup>333</sup> Not only is the soldier newly wealthy, *recens dives*, but he has earned this wealth through what Ovid interprets as disreputable activity—through his body, and his wounds serve as evidence for this. The soldier's actions become linked to those who secure profit with their bodies. In this way, the elegist's association of the scarred body with effeminacy comes full circle.

The poet-lover launches this same accusation against the *puella*: she sells her love (or her body) for the gifts of the wealthy rival. The narrator conflates the greed of the *puella* with that of the soldier.<sup>334</sup> Through this connection of greed, a fault classified as feminine within the genre through its close association

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<sup>330</sup> Edwards (1993) 81.

<sup>331</sup> See Williams (2010) 153 for similar arguments on greed and luxury.

<sup>332</sup> Richlin (1993) 558-559 using the *lex Julia municipalis* to show that the praetor's edict is relevant to *infamia* in the Republic, points out that the law indicates that "*queive corpore quaestum fecit fecerit*" are included among those counted as *infames*, alongside actors, gladiators, prostitutes, etc. See also Edwards (1997) on *infamia*.

<sup>333</sup> Many have seen this phrase as an indication of prostitution, but these studies do not explicate the implications of this accusation for the soldier's masculinity. See Holleman (1971), who reads it as a criticism of the equestrian order; Maleuvre (1998) 250, who transfers this accusation to Augustus; Weinlich (1999) 226, who sees it as merely an attack on character of a rival, but does not elaborate; and James (2003) 103, who sees it as a rhetorical strategy from which the lover must back away because it will not effectively persuade the *puella* who is "little different."

<sup>334</sup> See Maleuvre (1998) 249-250 on the collapsing of the soldier and *puella* figures into an allegory reflecting the vices of Rome.

with the *puella*, and the implication that the soldier has gained wealth through his body, Ovid works within normative masculine values and gendered stereotypes of greed to mark the soldier as effeminate. This complex of associations—the *puella*’s greed with that of the soldier’s and the soldier’s greed with the prior activities of his body—restricts his identity within the poem and reconfigures the parameters of traditional Roman masculinity.

Finally, Ovid uses this connection between the soldier-rival and his body to mark the lover as the positive term in this contest for the *puella*’s affections. On the one hand the *puella* is faced with the blood-covered and violent soldier, and on the other with the unpolluted priest (*purus sacerdos*). James, who reads the soldier’s scars as positive, sees this association as an “absurd” method of matching the soldier’s “dermatological evidence of his manhood.”<sup>335</sup> I argue, however, that the purity of the priest underscores the physical and moral blemishes of the soldier’s scarred body. Furthermore, the very association of the soldier with the body complicates his position. As the soldier’s identity in this poem is tied to his body, the impoverished poet is defined by activities of the mind (*ingenium*) and his pursuit of his *ingenuas artes*. The emphasis on the soldier’s body may not seem extraordinary in itself, but in the context of this implied opposition, this close association with the body and its activities renders the archetype for Roman masculinity effeminate. In this particular poem, the lover consciously distances himself from the body, and especially any corruption of that body. In this competitive context, Ovid omits mention of the symptoms of lovesickness or any other infirmity. Instead of an effeminized poet-lover, we

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<sup>335</sup> James (2003) 287 fn. 68 also uses Walters (1997) discussion of wounds, but reads the soldier’s wounds as positive.

see a poet-lover defined by virtues of the mind that are reflected in the purity of his body and a rival whose body is entangled in the depravity of its actions.

The remainder of this poem makes familiar elegiac complaints about the necessity and power of wealth in the pursuit of love, but, in these conventional objections, Ellen Greene reads the poet-lover's use of Jupiter seducing Danaë with money (at 3.8.29-34) as indication that he "is not upset about pandering for moral reasons, but because he can't afford the price."<sup>336</sup> She argues that the lover "reveals his moral outrage to be a sham."<sup>337</sup> This reading, however, appears to neglect the rest of the poem, because, while the lover may be upset about the economic realities of love and the fact that he cannot compete in those terms, the final lines of the poem return to condemnation of the wealth of the soldier and other public figures. Ovid's criticism of the soldier's body reframes the question of the pursuit of wealth, as well as those occupations that are placed in opposition to the lover's (Ovid, *Amores* 3.8.53-56):

*eruimus terra solidum pro frugibus aurum;  
possidet inventas sanguine miles opes.  
curia pauperibus clausa est, dat census honores;  
inde gravis index, inde severus eques.*

From the ground we tear solid gold instead of crops;  
the soldier holds wealth found in blood.  
The Senate is closed to poor men, and wealth gives public office;  
from there comes the solemn judge, from there the stern knight.

The earlier connection of the soldier's greed with his body has implications beyond himself, as the already disreputable fault of greed is extended to traditionally respectable positions of the judge and the knight. The respectability of these figures, demonstrated through their description as *gravis* (solemn) and

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<sup>336</sup> Greene (1994) 348

<sup>337</sup> Greene (1994) 348.

*severus* (stern), declines through their association with the soldier who secures wealth with blood. Ovid undercuts the position of not only the soldier, but also a broader class of public figures, all of whose wealth is poorly sought (*male quaesitas*) (Ovid, *Amores* 3.8.65-66):

*o si neglecti quisquam deus ultor amantis  
tam male quaesitas pulvere mutet opes!*

If only some avenger god for neglected lovers  
would exchange riches so poorly sought for dust!

The terms of this condemnation and opposition appear in an earlier accusation against the soldier, politician, and orator. It is not unusual for Ovid to defend his occupation as lover, and, in this case, his justification cites the moral corruption and futility of the figures in the public sphere (Ovid, *Amores* 1.15.1-6):

*quid mihi, Livor edax, ignavos obicis annos  
ingeniique vocas carmen inertis opus,  
non me more patrum, dum strenua sustinet aetas,  
praemia militiae pulverulenta sequi  
nec me verbosas leges ediscere nec me  
ingrato vocem prostituisse foro?*

Why do you complain to me, biting Envy, that my years have been  
slothful, and call my song the work of a lazy mind, and complain that  
I am not pursuing the dusty rewards of military service  
in traditional custom, while strong youth sustains me,  
that I am neither thoroughly learning the wordy laws  
nor have I prostituted my voice in the thankless forum?

Here Ovid critiques the traditional assessment of the occupations of the poet-lover and those of public service, confirming that elegy does not always adhere to the traditional binary.<sup>338</sup> In addition to denying his occupation as one of sloth (*ignavos*), he actively condemns the occupations normally designated as representing the values of *Romanitas*. He not only downplays the rewards of

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<sup>338</sup> McKeown (1989) 388-389 states that Ovid treats these respectable occupations in much the same terms as would normally be directed at competing genres of poetry.



military service and the status of the soldier by calling them dusty (*pulverulenta*),<sup>339</sup> but he belittles the significance of a public role in the forum as well. Politicians and orators are described in terms of inefficiency (*verbosas*) and, most significantly for our purposes, sexual immorality (*prostituisse*). Their words, as great a number as there are, are for hire; the honorable occupation of orator has been reduced to an exchange of money and the equivalent of prostitution. These careers that should deserve the most respect are instead tied to the body. Their profit comes from that body, and this circumstance is set in sharp contrast to the lover who, contrarily, does not prostitute his voice, much less his body.

This link between body and profit can be extended to other categories of reward beyond the financial. As Ovid presents a case for his sexual prowess and promotes the lifestyle of a lover, he compares the rewards and risks of his own occupation against those of the soldier. Not only has the soldier's wealth been gained with his body, but his honor and integrity, the very qualities that underlie Roman masculinity, have been bought with it as well (Ovid, *Amores* 2.10.27-36):

*saepe ego lascive consumpsi tempora noctis,  
 utilis et forti corpore mane fui.  
 felix, quem Veneris certamina mutua perdunt;  
 di faciant, leti causa sit ista mei!  
 induat adversis contraria pectora telis  
 miles et aeternum sanguine nomen emat;  
 quaerat avarus opes et, quae lassarit arando,  
 aequora periuro naufragus ore bibat;  
 at mihi contingat Veneris languescere motu,  
 cum moriar, medium solvar et inter opus;*

I have even spent a shameless night,  
 yet in the morning was still fit with a strong body.

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<sup>339</sup> McKeown (1989) 391 translates *pulverulenta* as "which fall into dust" indicating that they do not grant immortality, unlike poetry. This criticism of the rewards of battle mirrors that of Propertius 3.5 above.

He is happy, whomever Venus' shared struggles destroy;  
    may the gods make it so that that is the cause of my death!  
Let the soldier place his chest opposite the opposing spears  
    and buy an eternal name with blood;  
let the greedy sailor seek wealth and with his lying mouth  
    drink down the sea, which is wearisome to sail;  
but when I die, let me fall in the act of love,  
    let me leave in the middle of the deed.

The lover is not motivated by greed—in fact, he claims that he is happy to die in bed—and his body retains its physical integrity at the end of the day, as he wakes up fit with a strong body (*utilis et forti corpore mane fui*). The motivations of the sailor and soldier, however, lie with acquiring wealth and a great name. The soldier is not directly characterized as greedy, but his motives are colored by his proximity to the sailor. The sailor himself is explicitly described with the adjective *avarus* and associated with the pursuit of wealth (*opes*), to which his death is linked. He dies because he must sail the sea to gain that wealth. Similarly, the soldier dies because of that which he pursues. In this case it is not riches, but a name (*nomen*) that he seeks in the face of danger. This pursuit is not inherently associated with greed, but the pairing of this goal with the verb *emat* is an indication that he is not earning his name through honor. The buying (*emat*) of a name (*nomen*) with blood (*sanguine*) closely parallels the gaining of wealth through one's body seen in *Amores* 3.8.

The traditional image of the Roman soldier and his association with masculinity and *virtus* contrast sharply with elegy's presentation of the figure. Condemned through his wounds that serve as symbols of his corruption, the soldier and his body are judged as something negative, and surprisingly even effeminate. Criticism of the normally hypermasculine body of the Roman soldier through his wounds redefines the actions that produce these scars and the

identity of those who display them. In all of these passages, the effeminacy of the soldier is determined fourfold: 1) his greed indicates that his primary interest lies in himself, despite his role in the public sphere 2) the quality of avarice is one that is inappropriate for a Roman elite man 3) greed has been marked as feminine throughout elegiac discourse through its conventional connection to the *puella* 4) he earns money (and honor) with his body. Ultimately, all of these points of criticism are drawn from elegy's association of the soldier with his body and the implications of its actions.<sup>340</sup> Ovid essentially redraws the ideals of traditional Roman manliness through the extension of his criticism to the soldier and other areas of the public sphere that are associated with war and service to the Republic.

### Reexamining the Wounds of *Militia Amoris*

This reevaluation of the normally honorable soldier's wound complicates the lover's adoption of the *militia amoris* trope. The war wound is used by Tibullus and Ovid to distinguish the lover from the soldier, but the amatory wounds of the lover are implicitly patterned after the battle wounds of the soldier. Where does this rereading of the soldier's wound leave the amatory

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<sup>340</sup> Alston (1998) 212-216 uses evidence from Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.16-49) to illustrate the Augustan age soldier as being lower status in this period in which everyone was slave to the emperor. According to Tacitus, the facet which appears to drag down the soldier's status is physical imperfection in general, including the physical scars, which have not been earned in battle, but rather through beatings from the centurion. In this instance, a soldier's scars are not indicative of the bravery and service to the fatherland, as they were for the Republican period soldier, but rather of his subordinate status and of his need to be disciplined by his superior. I argue, however, that while Tacitus may be discussing the Augustan period, he is working within a later time period, so it would be difficult to associate this view of soldiers with the time period with any certainty. When assessing those wounds and scars resulting from real warfare, Ovid appears to be more in line with what will be seen in later evaluations of the soldier's body, as seen in Tacitus. It is possible that Ovid's discourse may be responding to this view of the soldier, but this could also result from criticism of a key elegiac rival.

wounds of the lover? To examine this question, we must separate the discourse implied in *militia amoris* from that of the greedy soldier whom the elegist condemns. When defining the poet-lover in terms of *militia amoris*, the traditional Republican idea of courage in battle and honorable suffering from wounds appears to be in play. The lover's conventional lack of interest in wealth preserves him from accusations of selling his body or his voice (as in *Amores* 1.15) for money; he also does not require his body to secure his name (*nomen*) as the soldier of *Amores* 2.10, because his poetry will make him immortal. The assumption of the risk of the wounds of *militia amoris* stems entirely from devotion to the *puella*. This motivation, mirroring a soldier's devotion to the fatherland, ties the lover's wounds to the conventional discourse on the soldier, not the lover's condemnation of the greedy soldier. While the soldier's wound becomes problematic because of his greed, that of the lover is secured by his elegiac values.

### Conclusion

The flexibility of the lover's identity allows him to simultaneously assume the lover's inviolability and the physical vulnerability of the soldier, both of which help him secure a status distanced from accusations of effeminacy. Adopting the positive discourse of the traditional soldier through the trope of *militia amoris*, the lover is able to borrow some of the status that figure enjoys. Any potential liminality introduced by physical wounding is eliminated by the lover's comparison of his loyalty to the *puella* to the traditional soldier's loyalty to the state and by the fact that his wounds are, in the end, metaphorical. In this

lack of tangibility the lover's wounds do not truly introduce the same problems that the wounds of the soldier do for that figure.

Outside of *militia amoris*, the soldier's scar and wounds do not reflect the literary discourse promoting normative values. The poetic conventions of *militia amoris* are, in the end, more stable than the sign of the soldier's scar. Rather than assume that a traditional role obligates the rendering of a traditional masculine body, elegiac discourse provides an alternate reading of the battle wound that destabilizes the soldier's identity. It is precisely the capacity of wounds to liminalize the soldier that allows Tibullus and Ovid to reassign the meaning behind the soldier's wounds. This recalibration of the soldier's sign repositions both soldier and elegiac narrator. Instead of serving as a positive *exemplum* within elegy, the soldier's scar reflects his pursuit of greed over the interests of the state. Through this avenue of argumentation, the lover's criticisms against his rival turn away from lamentation and baseless accusation to physical evidence. What is normally considered proper masculine behavior—going to battle and suffering its wounds—becomes effeminate when read by the lover. The insertion of the soldier's body into elegiac poetry and the gaze that evaluates that body reconfigures and expands the standard motifs of the poet-lover's criticism beyond mere questions of greed to essential questions of what it means to be a proper Roman man, and the soldier's body read by the poet-lover does not reflect what Roman literature has more broadly defined as the norm for Roman masculinity. The poet-lover displaces the soldier from the fixed position of the hypermasculine by using the very markers that should have secured this identity. The soldier's masculinity turns out to be just as negotiable as the lover's.

## Chapter V:

### Visual Accessibility and the Interchangeable Male Body

#### Introduction

As we have seen, physical display of the body is a double-edged sword: it can function as a way of claiming and asserting masculinity within Roman society, but it can also problematize and expose that same body to accusations of effeminacy. The difference depends upon the particular reading applied to that body. This question of visual surveillance has been in play throughout this study of the male body, as we have seen the lover renegotiate the terms of his physical body in response to possible readings guided by the values of Roman norms on the male body. While the lover is able to appropriate the positive connotations of the soldier's wound and display these signs to elevate his status, elegiac treatment of the other two common configurations of the lover's body—as either sick or irrelevant—reflects some recognition of the risks that stem from visual surveillance. In the construction of his body as infirm, the lover must recast the significance of the signs of the sick body in order to distance himself from some of the associated physical weakness; in his emphasis on literary talent over physical beauty, the lover distances himself from the body completely. The poet-lover's ability to regulate the terms of his body ensures the fluid nature of his identity, as he engages or disengages with the terms of masculinity or effeminacy as suits his rhetorical need. As narrator and maker of the elegiac

world, the lover is able in most instances to control the frame of the narrative scene, and often he stands outside of it, essentially removing himself from potential visual evaluation and its risks for masculine identity. This chapter will examine the interplay between the accessible and visible body of the elegiac peers and rivals and the seemingly inaccessible and invisible body of the poet-lover. The degree of physical exposure to which other male bodies are subject reflects the lover's attention to his own vulnerability. By examining these other bodies, we gain insight not only into the masculine identity of these characters, but also into that of the lover.

My argument for a correlation between the visible and invisible bodies of the male characters finds support in the elegiac lover's assertion of potential interchangeability among the adult males within the amatory narrative. We have seen how the lover differentiates his identity from the soldier-rival, but one of the key themes of the lover's discourse is that he and his rivals are theoretically interchangeable in the context of the amatory narrative (Propertius 2.9.1-2):<sup>341</sup>

*iste quod est, ego saepe fui; sed fors et in hora  
hoc ipso eiecto carior alter erit.*

I have often been what he is; but perhaps and in time  
another will be more dear than this one once he's been cast out.

The rival fulfills the role and occupies the space that the lover once filled when he was experiencing success with the *puella*: Propertius has been what the current rival is (*iste quod est, ego saepe fui*). As Greene explores in her study of the love triangle in 2.9, this implied equivalence at times drives the lover's

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<sup>341</sup> Cf. also Propertius 2.8.7-8 for this idea of interchangeability.

assumption of an “epic persona,” which allows the lover to dominate his rival.<sup>342</sup> Rosati similarly examines the implications of this shared status; he considers the notion of interchangeability a valuable tool for understanding the condition of the elegiac lover, because the displaced lover is able to better comprehend his own suffering by seeing it mirrored in another.<sup>343</sup> Complementary to both of these approaches, I apply this concept more broadly in order to uncover how the potential for equal status affects the poet-lover’s representation of the soldier-rival in contexts outside of this particular poem. If the hypothetical substitution of one lover for the other is able to impact how the poet-lover constructs or understands his own identity, it inevitably also influences the discourse surrounding his rival’s identity.

This interchangeability of the rival and the lover is matched by an equal potential for substitution by those males whom the lover considers his *amici*, those who are peers in love rather than rivals. The poet-lover’s role as *praeceptor amoris*, whether stated or not, underscores this relationship at the same time as it provides a modicum of distance. Despite his seemingly detached objectivity about love, the reason that the lover is able to teach his student-lovers or offer advice to his friends is that they are where he has been before. Thus, through a reading of the bodies of the lover’s amatory peers, we are able to work around the lack of direct evidence for the lover’s body, while also revealing more about these other male bodies.

This system of narrative interchangeability does not always transfer directly to the poet’s discourse on the male body. The conflicting values of the

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<sup>342</sup> Greene (2005a) 224f.

<sup>343</sup> Rosati (2008) 262-264.



soldier (as) rival and the poet-lover cannot translate within this system of substitution.<sup>344</sup> Although interchangeable within the amatory narrative, the competition for the *puella* establishes their relationship as one of opposition, and the exposure of the soldier's body particularly reflects that condition. Logically, those male characters whom the lover identifies as amatory peers should largely mirror the discourse appropriate for the lover himself. His friends stand in as proxies for the lover himself, as they suffer the same symptoms as the lover in his own pursuit of the *puella*. Therefore, in the poet-lover's configuration of the physical accessibility of these figures, one might expect relatively minor exposure of his amatory peer and maximum display of his rival, in order to preserve the masculinity of the peer and liminalize that of the rival. This trend is generally reflected in the presentation of male bodies, but the interaction of each of these figures with the lover complicates this simple system. This chapter will demonstrate a correlation between the visual accessibility of elegy's male characters and their status as the lover's amatory rival or peer. Both the level and terms of physical exposure are generally dictated by each character's narrative relationship with the poet-lover, thus demonstrating the poet-lover's conscious construction of these male figures in relation to himself.

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<sup>344</sup> Rosati (2008) emphasizes the rival's role as an alter-ego for the lover.

## The Problems of Being Seen: Context and Perspective

Visibility itself does not automatically indicate effeminacy or lack of agency, but rather the accompanying criticism is what problematizes visibility.<sup>345</sup>

Particularly within the “specular regime” of Roman public life, where

“visibility and social values...lay at the basis of the elite performance of selfhood. Roman senators, consuls, generals and even soldiers felt themselves called upon to provide models of behavior for what they perceived as a watchful society, and in this culture of exemplarity one repeatedly sought visual affirmation of one’s ethical, military, or class standing—or even one’s masculinity.”<sup>346</sup>

Male behavior and identity were enforced and delineated by a “collective gaze,” through which the male body and its performance became fundamental to a male’s gender identity.<sup>347</sup> Much like the public display of the Roman youths discussed in chapter two, adult male public life took place under the surveillance of the public eye and entailed “a willingness to be on display, to be seen, and therefore to be vulnerable.”<sup>348</sup> The masculinity of a Roman man’s public identity was constructed from the audience’s evaluation of the performative and visual elements of daily public life:

Both *in melius* and *in deterius*, the gaze of one’s fellow citizens and especially of the fellow elite were closely linked to self-worth, public worth, and ethical evaluation. Moreover, because the gaze could be aggressive as well as admiring, destructive as well as productive, one needed to have control over its effects—a control that the Roman upper classes practiced with varying degrees of success.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> For further discussion on the necessity for and the risks entailed in public scrutiny, see Barton (2002) and Raucci (2004) 2-6.

<sup>346</sup> Bartsch (2006) 6.

<sup>347</sup> Bartsch (2006) 117 uses this term to describe the enforcement of societal norms by the public in general. See Corbeill (1996) on the use of this type of gaze in the context of oratorical performance. See Gleason (1995) and Wray (2001) on the performance of gender. See Gamel (1998) on the nature of elegiac performance before an audience.

<sup>348</sup> Fredrick (2002) 21.

<sup>349</sup> Bartsch (2006) 117.

The ability to be open to being seen, and yet not succumb to visual aggression, is key to being a Roman male. This potential vulnerability is balanced with the power to engage in “reciprocal acts of watching and evaluating” that ensure that no individual holds sole visual power.<sup>350</sup> To preserve his subjectivity, a Roman male would desire to control his exposure, while conducting his own reading of others.

Within elegy we see a literary manipulation of this social construct, as the elegist deploys a similar type of surveillance over his male characters. The problems of this application within the literary world, however, are manifold: the surveillance has the potential to be relocated to the context of the private sphere, there is little room for reciprocal reading of the lover’s body within the elegiac text, and the degree and type of exposure is controlled by the poet-lover. He manages not only the setting and the extent of display, but the specific lens through which each body is read. Context and perspective are key to determining the bias and texture of the viewer’s reading. Context, either physical or ideological, is essential to the reading of a specific body. Bodies are not culturally neutral objects, but are constructs and may be treated as texts to be read; narrative space colors the reader’s perception of the body. A body read in public space expects a certain reading. Elegy’s fulfillment or disruption of these expectations shapes the body being read. Discrepancies between the expected reading of a particular body in a specific context and the lover’s reading can reveal the tensions in the poet’s attempts to outline the identity of each elegiac character relative to the lover’s own. The context can be proper, the activities of

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<sup>350</sup> Bartsch (2006) 136-137 contrasts Roman public surveillance with Foucault’s idea of the panopticon from *Discipline and Punish*, in which a “disciplinary gaze” is employed from one direction only (that of the warden’s) to control behavior of the inmates.

the body might be appropriate, but oftentimes the elegiac reading of this body in context contradicts that expected by the reader. Such incongruities suggest the risks associated with exposure, as the poet-lover projects them onto other elegiac bodies. The body may be neutral in itself, but it is the spectator who defines the nature of the body he or she sees. Thus, visual access becomes a problem depending upon the particular rendering of visibility, which the poet-lover manages according to his narrative relationships with male figures.

### Hiding and Revealing the Lover's Body

The character Gallus<sup>351</sup> serves as one of the main peers with whom the Propertian lover interacts and to whom he gives advice.<sup>352</sup> Both Rosati and Stok present Gallus' relationship to Propertius as one of fluctuation. While Stok goes on to identify the Gallus of 1.10 as an *amicus*, he treats the lover's relationship with Gallus in 1.5 and 1.13 as an overlap between friendship and rivalry (*una certa sovrapposizione di ruoli fra amico-rivale ed amata*).<sup>353</sup> Although Rosati notices the potential for reflection of the lover's circumstances in the figure of Gallus, his study does not distinguish between different levels of rivalry.<sup>354</sup> I, however, do not consider Gallus a rival to the same degree as the soldier, because there is a fundamental difference between the poetic peer as rival and the soldier as rival that cannot be reconciled by the recognition of shared emotions. Further, while Gallus serves as a potential rival for Cynthia in 1.5, this position is short-lived.

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<sup>351</sup> The specific identity of this Gallus does not have direct bearing on my question of visual access and exposure. Most do consider this Gallus to be the elegiac poet, Cornelius Gallus. See Ross (1975) 82-84 and Miller (2004) 78. For the opposing view, see Fedeli (1980) 152.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Propertius 1.7 and 1.9 for Ponticus. While adversarial, Ponticus is not an amatory rival, and still benefits from Propertius' advice. In 1.4, Propertius advises Bassus not to interfere, or he will face Cynthia's wrath. Again, Bassus is adversarial, but not a true competitor for the *puella*.

<sup>353</sup> Stok (2008) 220.

<sup>354</sup> Rosati (2008) 262.

Both the tone of the narrator's response in 1.5<sup>355</sup> and Gallus' shared physical signs of lovesickness indicate that they are not true rivals.

This friendship continues in a later encounter, in which Propertius relates an episode he witnessed between Gallus and his *puella*. Most readings of Propertius 1.10 focus upon the homosocial aspects of the relationship between Gallus and Propertius.<sup>356</sup> In an effort to connect this Gallus to the elegiac poet and illustrate the deeper bonds between these two figures, this conversation often turns into a metapoetic interpretation of Propertius' voyeurism as a scene of the narrator reading Gallus' elegiac poetry and not spying on Gallus with his *puella*.<sup>357</sup> This reading is supported by references to poetic composition through various phrases used in this poem.<sup>358</sup> My interest, however, lies specifically in the voyeuristic nature of the scene and the subsequent exposure of the male body (Propertius 1.10.1-10).<sup>359</sup>

*o iucunda quies primo cum testis amori  
adfueram vestris conscius in lacrimis!  
o noctem meminisse mihi iucunda voluptas,  
o quotiens votis illa vocanda meis,  
cum te complexa morientem, Galle, puella  
vidimus et longa ducere verba mora.  
quamvis labentes premeret mihi somnus ocellos  
et mediis caelo luna ruberet equis,  
non tamen a vestro potui secedere lusu:  
tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat.*

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<sup>355</sup> For instance, Keith (2008) 120 notes that Propertius brings Gallus "into his own camp" and notes the "mutual suffering and consolation" of both men, which alludes to a relationship more appropriate to colleagues rather than bitter rivals.

<sup>356</sup> On Propertius' homosocial relationship to Gallus (often in connection to Catullus 50): see Miller (2004) 83-94, Pincus (2004), Keith (2008) 119-127, Stok (2008), and Pasco-Pranger (2009).

<sup>357</sup> See Sharrock (1990), Miller (2004) 78-80, Pincus (2004), Keith (2008) 121 and 185n.13 for further bibliography.

<sup>358</sup> The poet, Gallus, is a plausible referent in this context considering the references to poetry in the terms *ducere*, *alternis vocibus*, *verba*. Miller (2004) 79 comments on these terms and adds an extensive discussion of *lusu* as a term indicating both erotic play and erotic verse in Catullus.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Propertius 1.13.

O delightful night, when as a witness in the first throes of love,  
 I was present sharing in your tears!  
 What a delightful pleasure for me to have remembered that night,  
 how often it will be called upon in my prayers,  
 when I saw you languishing in the embrace of the *puella*  
 and drawing out your words with a long pause.  
 Although sleep pressed my slipping eyes  
 and the Moon blushed with her horses at mid point in the sky,  
 nevertheless I was not able to withdraw from your game:  
 so great was the passion in each of your voices.

Restricting our frame to the amatory narrative, the circumstances of the affair are described from a voyeuristic perspective, which has the potential to complicate Gallus' status, depending on the specific rendering of the scene. The possible effeminacy demonstrated both by Gallus' tears (*vestris...lacrimis*) and by serving as spectacle (*vidimus*) for someone else's pleasure (*iucunda voluptas*) is mitigated by an understanding of Propertius as a fellow lover. Propertius identifies himself as Gallus' equal, but also slightly distinguishes himself as a kind of *praeceptor amoris*. Propertius as witness (*testis*)<sup>360</sup> shares (*consciis*) in Gallus' experience, and is in danger of slipping into the scene himself through his presence (*affueram*) and affinity with Gallus. Although Propertius' body physically lies outside of this particular scene, the line between Propertius and Gallus is narrow at best, as he witnesses a scene that one could observe if one looked in on him and Cynthia. It is not much of a transposition to replace Gallus' body with that of Propertius. Both lovers participate in the same type of activity with the same type of female character, and so the parameters by which he describes this scene between Gallus and his *puella* are indicative of what type of discourse on accessibility and exposure might be appropriate for Propertius

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<sup>360</sup> Many read this use of *testis* as a pun referring to 'testicle,' perverting even further Propertius' presence in this scene. This was originally suggested by Oliensis (1997), and repeated in others: Janan (2001) 43, Pincus (2004), Miller (2004) 84.

himself. The incident, while emotionally revealing and framed as a scene of voyeurism, actually limits access to Gallus' physicality. Gallus' body is not eroticized and is minimally present, a circumstance that might reflect his status as substitute for the lover himself, whose body often recedes into the background as mere narrative detail. The narrator conveniently falls asleep at the point of potential elaboration on the physical aspects of the sexual encounter.<sup>361</sup> Instead, Propertius goes on to offer his own credentials on love and gives advice to Gallus about his affair (lms. 1.10.11-30).

Gallus again serves as a spectacle for the poet-lover's delight a few poems later. This account is rendered in much the same tenor as the previous incident—once again Propertius is a witness (*teste*) to Gallus' amatory encounter with his *puella* (Propertius 1.13.13-18):

*quae cano non rumore malo, non augure doctus:  
 vidi ego. me quaeso teste negare potes?  
 vidi ego te toto vinctum languescere collo  
 et flere iniectis, Galle, diu manibus,  
 et cupere optatis animam deponere labris,  
 et quae deinde meus celat, amice, pudor.  
 non ego complexus potui diducere vestros:  
 tantus erat demens inter utrosque furor.*

Which things I sing having learned them neither through evil rumor nor augury:

I saw them. Are you able to deny with me as witness, I ask?  
 I saw you, Gallus, bound completely by your neck weaken  
 and weep for a long time with your hands thrown around her,  
 and how you wanted to hand over your spirit to her desired lips,  
 and my shame hides the rest, friend.  
 I was not able to break apart your embraces:  
 such was the frenzied passion between both of you.

Again, Propertius sees (*vidi*) the emotional display that occurs when Gallus interacts with his *puella*, and these emotions are the amatory components that his

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<sup>361</sup> Connolly (2000) 75-79 notes this coincidence for Propertius 2.15.7, as she discusses the manipulation of vision as a method of "delay and deferral" in that poem.

reading dissects: Gallus weeps (*flere*) and is caught up in a frenzied passion (*demens furor*). We observe the scene, but receive little description of the physical interaction beyond mention of Gallus' neck (*collo*), hands (*manibus*), lips (*labris*), and the lovers' embrace (*complexus*). These features make up elegy's standard set of body parts when discussing scenes of love. Other details that emerge fall in line with what has been established as appropriate for the body of an elegiac lover: we see a lovesick body with an emphasis on mind over body. Gallus is weakened (*languescere*),<sup>362</sup> and it is not his body that he hands over, but his soul (*cupere...animam deponere*).

What is more telling is that when Propertius does reach the point where he might provide a description of physical interaction in either poem, he breaks off the description of what he has witnessed, due to his modesty (*pudor*). While the poet-lover sets the scene for an erotic encounter, he neglects to finish what he started. The plots of both Gallus poems pause to examine the emotional turmoil experienced in his success or failure at love, rather than the physical body of the lover. Roberto Gazich examines the way in which Propertius manipulates the narrative frame of these two scenes in order to establish a "law of behavior" (*legge di comportamento*) for elegiac ideology, through both the poet's description of Gallus' emotion and his use of Neptune and Hercules as mythological *exempla* (at 1.13.21-25).<sup>363</sup> I agree with Gazich's point that amatory passion is an important feature of these scenes of voyeurism and that the scene is composed to draw attention to those emotions. Each poem reflects a dissection of the

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<sup>362</sup> Compare the use of *languescere* here and at Ovid, *Amores* 2.10.35 to *languidus* seen in *Amores* 3.7.3 and 3.7.66. Both instances reflect weakness of the lover: those in Propertius 1.13.15 and *Amores* 2.10.35 are positive (weakness in the *puella's* embrace), where the others in *Amores* 3.7 are negative (the narrator's impotence). Cf. also McKeown (1998) 220 for discussion of this difference.

<sup>363</sup> Gazich (1995) 65.



emotional components of love, rather than the physical body of the lover who inhabits the scene. The poem's focus on Gallus' tears, the couple's passion, and Propertius' joy indicates interest in an emotional *tableau*, rather than an *ekphrasis* of physical eroticism or beauty.<sup>364</sup> While these *exempla* set up a baseline for elegiac emotion, I expand Gazich's discussion of the limitation of the narrative scene beyond elegiac values to normative Roman values. The elegist's interest in regulating the visibility of the lover also concerns the risks of visual exposure, which may be observed in the lover's interactions with his *puella*.

This scene is a striking contrast to the elaborate descriptions seen in the context of the female's body, where a fetishizing gaze details nearly every aspect of her body, although, admittedly, still not the act itself. The marked difference in the presentation of the *puella* and the lover highlights how the poet-lover controls his own visibility throughout his narrative. In a scene depicting his own encounter with Corinna,<sup>365</sup> Ovid presents elaborate description of her body as he works the reader up to the point of physical consummation, at which point he draws the audience's eyes away in order to obscure the lover's body (Ovid, *Amores* 1.5.17-26):

*ut stetit ante oculos posito velamine nostros,  
in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit:  
quos umeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos!  
forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!*

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<sup>364</sup> Greene (1998) 71-72 mentions the idea of elegiac emotion as "a matter of artifice" in the context of Ovid's elegy, in consideration of "the emotional vacuousness of the male lover who does not care for any particular *puella* but only for the way in which she may be used as literary *materia*." In other words, the sentiment precedes the *puella*, indicating that the emotion behind the amatory angst is constructed out of poetic necessity. This discussion puts the ekphrastic description of the lover's emotion in new light, and makes it that much more comparable to the generic descriptions of the bodies of elegiac *puellae*. Emotion is the construct by which the poet-lover chooses to characterize Gallus and himself.

<sup>365</sup> Greene (1998) 77-84 discusses this poem as a product of the speaker's imagination noting the "excessive symmetry" of the scene, rather than a realistic narrative episode. Corinna's body replicates the symmetry of the scene, with a single body that embodies "a paradigm of *both* virtue and licentiousness" (81).

*quam castigato planus sub pectore venter!  
quantum et quale latus! quam iuvenale femur!  
singula quid referam? nil non laudabile vidi,  
et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum.  
cetera quis nescit? lassi requievimus ambo.  
proveniant medii sic mihi saepe dies.*

As she stood before my eyes with her clothing cast aside,  
there was a fault nowhere on her whole body:  
what shoulders, what arms I saw and touched!  
How fit for squeezing was the shape of her nipples!  
How flat her stomach was below her petite chest!  
Of what size and sort her hip! How youthful her thigh!  
Why repeat the individual details? I saw nothing not worthy of praise,  
and I pressed the naked girl up to my body.  
Who doesn't know the rest? Tired we both lay resting.  
may mid-days turn out this way for me often.

Unsurprisingly, in the lines prior to the last four, the lover's gaze is focused on the *puella*, and not his own body.<sup>366</sup> He is interested in the potential for elaborating on each detail of *her* body, at least up to the point where his own might enter the picture.<sup>367</sup> Such physical detachment in the description of his own amatory encounter matches that seen in the context of Gallus. Further, while the *puella*'s body is presented in pieces, her body becomes whole "only after it is assimilated to the body of the speaker."<sup>368</sup> That male body is non-descript, but the assumption is that it is whole and neutral, and therefore requires no definition.

Joy Connolly attributes this disruption in the erotic narrative to both elegy's "mode of operation" that requires constant deferral of bliss and its "discomfort with physicality in general."<sup>369</sup> In regard to the first aspect of her

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<sup>366</sup> Greene (1998) 82-84 frames the description of Corinna in *Amores* 1.5 in terms of Mulvey's theory of scopophilia.

<sup>367</sup> Cf. Propertius 2.15.1-10 below for a similar scene emphasizing the physicality of the *puella* to color the scene.

<sup>368</sup> Greene (1998) 83.

<sup>369</sup> Connolly (2000) 75 and 88. As acknowledged elsewhere in this dissertation, elegy indeed requires that the lover and *puella* be at odds in order for the poet-lover to be able to compose

argument, Connolly asserts that elegy's "main aesthetic purpose is the careful choice of those strategies of representation that may describe the pathways of and around erotic consummation...without ever actually achieving it."<sup>370</sup> In this argument, Connolly appears to be conflating the experience of the lover and the reader. At the level of the narrative, the lover is successful in these passages, even if only temporarily. In these cases, the "delays and deferrals"<sup>371</sup> are for the reader's benefit, not the poet-lover's. The outside reader's interest in the genre might be dulled with explicit accounts of success, but the lover's occasional success does not "[remove] the reasons for the text's existence;"<sup>372</sup> it is only one victory followed by numerous other failures.

In his claim that there is no need to repeat (*referam*) the details (*singula*) of the encounter, Ovid makes more explicit what the above Gallus passages in Propertius imply: everyone knows the rest. This statement points directly to one of the reasons for the omission of scenes of sexual activity—elegy's tendency toward euphemism—while his abrupt transition to other matters implies an interest in protecting the masculine integrity of the lovers in question. As Sharrock states, elegy is

"intimately concerned with sex but not spelling out the details, and perhaps even pretending not to be quite as erotic as it is. Elegy talks about sex using for the most part language which convention decrees constitutes a veil of modesty over the subject...it plays around with the eroticism of euphemism."<sup>373</sup>

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poetry lamenting his position as an unsuccessful lover, but this emphasis on failure is coupled with periodic bouts of success, as the lover's hopes for future success prolong his despair. Her argument implies that success only happens, if it can be witnessed by the reader. Her second point about elegy's "discomfort with physicality in general" is not demonstrated within elegy, either in descriptions of the *puellae* or the male body as presented in this text. The physicality might be presented in conventional terms, but it is fairly ubiquitous.

<sup>370</sup> Connolly (2000) 75.

<sup>371</sup> Connolly (2000) 78.

<sup>372</sup> Connolly (2000) 73.

<sup>373</sup> Sharrock (1995) 158.

This reluctance to provide explicit detail is part of the reason for not talking about these sexual encounters, but it cannot serve as the sole explanation.<sup>374</sup> The poet-lovers could supply a euphemistic account of this type of scene, as the Ovidian narrator did with his bout with impotence.<sup>375</sup> Ovid's above statement indicates that the gaps are left up to the reader's imagination. There is no need to go on, and doing so would be to the harm of the lover in question. While explaining the relatively detailed picture of the erotic body provided in *Amores* 3.7 in comparison to these scenes of lovemaking, Connolly states that "the body is the object of a sustained elegiac gaze only when its erotic capacity is compromised."<sup>376</sup> A discredited physical body yields a problematic visibility that emphasizes that failure. Inversely, a successful physical body yields little to no visual access. What we are missing in these scenes of omitted sexual encounters is the body in action, which in this case reflects the potency of the lover. In this hesitation to grant physical access and to expose the successful body, we see a reluctance to compromise the physical integrity of those bodies. In the question of impotence, masculinity is already a question because of the physical condition; all the lover can do is reconfigure the terms of that impotence.<sup>377</sup> In this case, however, sexual potency is a masculine attribute, but explicit description of sexual encounters would demean the lover. His body would become a series of body parts, and he would become an object, despite his sexual success. In this

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<sup>374</sup> By limiting access to the lover's body, the elegists conform to Roman ideas of decorum against male nudity. For this cf. Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.126-127: *principio corporis nostri magnam natura ipsa videatur habuisse rationem, quae formam nostram reliquamque figuram, in qua esset species honesta, eam posuit in promptu, quae partes autem corporis ad naturae necessitatem datae aspectum essent deformem habiturae [atque formam], eas contextit atque abdidit.* For brief discussion of this passage, see Fantham (1972).

<sup>375</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Amores* 3.7.

<sup>376</sup> Connolly (2000) 85.

<sup>377</sup> For this discussion, see Chapter Three pages 98-111.

instance, the lover's prowess is confirmed by his imagined, although inaccessible, body.

In a scene displaying a similar interest in downplaying the male body in an erotic encounter, Propertius' interest lies in describing his own encounter with his *puella* through the details of the female body (Propertius 2.15.1-10):<sup>378</sup>

*io me felicem! io nox mihi candida! io tu,  
lectule deliciis facte beate meis!  
illa meos somno lapsos patefecit ocellos  
ore suo et dixit 'sicine, lente, iaces?'  
quam vario amplexu mutamus bracchia, quantum  
oscula sunt labris ista morata meis!  
quam multa apposita narramus verba lucerna,  
quantaque sublato lumine rixa fuit!  
nam modo nudatis mecum est luctata papillis;  
interdum tunica duxit operta moram.*

O lucky me! Night brilliant for me! And you  
little bed made blessed by my charms!  
She brought open my eyes having slipped to sleep  
with her mouth and said "do you lay around, sluggish man?"  
How we changed our arms in various embraces, how many  
of those kisses lingered on my lips!  
How many words we spoke with the lamp placed near us,  
how many struggles there were with the light carried away!  
For now she wrestled with me with her breasts uncovered,  
meanwhile with her tunic open she drew out delay.

Both this and Ovid's encounter with his *puella* indicate an interest at distancing the lover's characterization from the erotic potential of his body. Both poet-lovers focus on the female body for the erotic coloring of the scene, and their own presence is primarily emotional. Despite these efforts, however, the lovers' bodies are not completely absent. Beyond the general indications of physical presence that are required for narrative purposes, there are allusions to the

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<sup>378</sup> La Penna (1977) 58 interprets the visual emphasis on the *puella*'s body as the traditional warning of the poet to his beloved to enjoy youth while she can. He extends this message beyond the personal to a more universal message of enjoying life in general. This reading is possible, but it misses the focus of the theme of voyeurism shared with Propertius 1.10 and 1.13.

effects that lovemaking has upon their physicality and masculinity. The physicality described through terms indicating struggle (*rixa* and *luctata*, lines 4 and 5) lends a degree of virility, as they signal physical dominance over the *puella*.<sup>379</sup> This strength is balanced by the implications of weakness through indications of fatigue after sex, with Ovid's admission of being tired (*lassi*) and Propertius' *puella* calling him sluggish (*lente*). Even within these small scenes, the physical identity of the lover wavers between two poles of masculinity, reflecting his mobile status in the larger picture of elegy.

The exposure of the male body in the private context of the bedroom might raise expectations of erotically charged bodies and the associated effeminization of the male body. While the elegists demonstrate little hesitation about exposing the *puella*'s body in these bedroom scenes, access to the lover's body is more restricted. Much of the physicality of the male lovers is implied, and, when their bodies are physically accessible in these sexual scenes, they are featured as part of the action, and, surprisingly, are not rendered in erotic terms (i.e. *formosus*, *tenerus*, etc) outside the category of lovesickness. The lover does describe himself with a limited set of erotic terms elsewhere,<sup>380</sup> but the application of these terms through the sight of another suggests a higher degree of effeminization than when self-imposed. The private setting and the personal activity do not harm the lover's (or his fellow peers') masculinity any more than

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<sup>379</sup> See Yardley (1976) for the uses of *rixa* in elegiac contexts: as a metaphor for sex (seen only in Propertius 2.15.4), as "the *rixa ante fores*, in which an excluded lover makes a violent effort to gain admittance to the house or fights outside the doors with his rivals, or to the lover's quarrel with his girl" (125). In all cases outside of the metaphor, *rixa* entails some level of aggression, although at times this violence is perpetrated against the lover himself. For the description of erotic encounters with the *puella* in terms of "domination and conquest," see Greene (1998) 81 who addresses the issue for *Amores* 1.5, and Cahoon (1988).

<sup>380</sup> For example, *tenerus* see Tibullus 1.2.73 and 2.3.10 (of hands). *Formosus* is never used for the poet-lover, see fn. 97 and 120, for uses of this adjective to describe a male.

the other categories examined in earlier chapters. Even in this context, there is vacillation between potency and vulnerability.

So, while the lover's body is not absent from elegiac narrative, there is careful attention in the presentation of it to the reader. The eyes of the spectator provide the framework of the image, as lover limits the range of the picture to exclude certain readings of the self, or even of his fellow lover in the case of Propertius' spying on Gallus. There is a body behind the gaze, however, and this body may be seen through minimal indications of the body within the narrative action and through the peers (Gallus) who serve as a type of surrogate. The careful monitoring of the visual access allowed to the body of a peer highlights the lover's awareness of the interchangeability between himself and his peer. Gallus' role as lover appears to spare him criticism and erotic exposure of the body, but, as we will see, visual access to the soldier problematizes his identity in spite of the public context of his scenes.

### Opposition and the Soldier-Rival's Visibility

We now turn to an examination of the visual management of the soldier's body. Beyond his obvious fashioning of the *puella*, the lover seems most active in constructing and reading the body of the soldier (as) rival. Despite the implication that lover and soldier/rival are interchangeable within the amatory narrative, their relationship is primarily one of difference. Both aspects of the soldier-rival's identity stand in opposition to the duality of the poet-lover's own role within the elegiac narrative. This inherent rivalry is played out in elegy's construction of the soldier's body, as the degree of visible accessibility and terms of exposure again reflect the nature of the narrative relationship. While elegy

minimizes the exposure of the lover's peers in the private sphere, it maximizes visual vulnerability of the soldier within that of the public. It is surprisingly in the context of the battlefield that elegy most often explores the dangers of visual exposure, as well as the ethical criticism and erotic evaluation such visibility invites.

Visibility becomes one mode through which the Tibullan lover of 1.2 is able to set himself apart from the soldier / rival. As he attempts to persuade Delia that she should favor him, the narrator places his elegiac values in direct opposition to those of the soldier: while the armored soldier is away at war pursuing wealth, Tibullus is willing to live humbly (by herding and sleeping on untended ground) as long as he can hold his *puella* in his tender arms (*teneris...lacertis*). In addition to these standard arguments emphasizing difference, the lover presents a soldier primarily defined through the display of his body (Tibullus 1.2.65-74):

*ferreus ille fuit qui, te cum posset habere,  
maluerit praedas stultus et arma sequi.  
ille licet Cilicum victas agat ante catervas,  
ponat et in capto Martia castra solo,  
totus et argento contextus, totus et auro,  
insideat celeri conspiciendus equo,  
ipse boves mea si tecum modo Delia possim  
iungere et in solito pascere monte pecus,  
et te dum liceat teneris retinere lacertis,  
mollis et inculta sit mihi somnus humo.*

He had a heart of iron, who, although he was able to have you  
foolishly preferred to follow after booty and arms.  
Let him chase before him the defeated troops of Cilicia  
and set up Mars' camp on captured soil,  
covered completely in silver and in gold,  
let him sit a quick horse for all to see,  
if only I were there with you, my Delia, I would be able to yoke the herd  
and set the flock to pasture on the accustomed mountainside,  
and as long as it is allowed to hold you in my tender arms,  
I may have soft sleep on the uncultivated ground.



We encounter an imagined scene of the soldier on display before an audience (*conspiciendus*, line 68). Instead of connecting his rival to the standard activities of a soldier—warfare—Tibullus presents him as a spectacle that seems a natural configuration of the soldier’s body. Such physical exhibition fits in well with the description of heroes’ bodies in epic, where the warrior is a figure that is to be seen.<sup>381</sup> In this context, it is not the display itself that problematizes the male body. The soldier himself appears to participate willingly in this scene of display, as the gerundive *conspiciendus* indicates a clear intent to be seen.

In this imagined public context, however, the soldier falls victim to the lover’s reading. As a soldier, he is acting as he should in an appropriate context: he is in arms on the battlefield—a figure to be seen in all his glory. The poet-lover’s view, however, problematizes the soldier’s body despite this appropriate context. The tone of the subjunctive *insideat*<sup>382</sup> indicates the lover’s disapproval, not necessarily for being visibly available, but for what that display indicates: values in opposition to those of the lover. Once again, the soldier is deemed unsuited for love because of his greed, and once again that greed is intertwined with display of the soldier’s body.<sup>383</sup> This condemnation is fused to the soldier’s body through the direct contact of body and armor. Instead of merely wearing armor, his body is characterized as being covered (*contextus*) in silver and gold. Putnam notes how this description makes it seem like “the victor is no person at all but an object ‘woven’ of costly metals...The man and his trappings are one,

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<sup>381</sup> Display and admiration of the soldier is not uncommon in epic, and may be seen in a number of different types of scenes, including arming scenes, wounding scenes, death scenes of young warriors, or the *teichoscopia*.

<sup>382</sup> I am in agreement with Putnam (1973) 70, who notes the pejorative tone of *insideat*.

<sup>383</sup> See discussion of *Amores* 3.8 in Chapter 4.

suggesting an equestrian statue rather than a human being."<sup>384</sup> The symbol of extravagance (the armor) and the individual (his body) become one. The soldier becomes a spectacle and is literally objectified. The body becomes the *locus* of accusations of effeminacy. Being seen is part of being a public figure, but, when one lacks the ability to control the meaning, it introduces the potential for a liminal status within the text.

Strikingly, this visual display, normally suited to the soldier or warrior, contrasts markedly with the lover's description of his own visibility in the same poem, thus expanding upon the gap between the identities of these two figures. In his description of his journey to the *puella's* door, the lover asserts that he is *not* to be seen, as he conducts the affairs of Venus (Tibullus 1.2.33-40):

*parcite luminibus, seu vir seu femina fiat  
obvia: celari vult sua furta Venus.  
neu strepitu terrete pedum neu quaerite nomen  
neu prope fulgenti lumina ferte face.  
si quis et imprudens aspexerit, occulat ille  
perque deos omnes se meminisse neget:  
nam fuerit quicumque loquax, is sanguine natam,  
is Venerem e rabido sentiet esse mari.*

Avert your eyes, whether man or woman happen  
across us: Venus wants her thefts to be hidden.  
And do not frighten us with a rustle of your feet or seek our names  
and do not bring the light nearby with your flashing torch.  
If anyone has unexpectedly seen us, let him hide the fact  
and by all the gods and deny that he remembers:  
for anyone who is a gossip, he will understand,  
that Venus was born from blood and from the fierce sea.

Tibullus' status as lover requires a freedom from judgment that arises from being seen. Any potential witnesses to his relationship should turn their eyes

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<sup>384</sup> Putnam (1973) 70 remarks on the close connection between the materials of the armor and the body of the soldier. He states that "the victor is no person at all but an object 'woven' of costly metals, if such is metaphorically possible. The man and his trappings are one, suggesting an equestrian statue rather than a human being."

elsewhere (*parcite luminibus*) and not seek to see or know more, either by looking or asking questions. His appearance, any further clarification of his identity, and any report or judgment on that appearance are all limited due to his role as lover, under the threat of Venus' wrath. Unlike the soldier above who is presented as naturally on display and visually knowable, and therefore open to critique and a hostile reading, the lover presents a hidden self, both in terms of body and identity. This visible inaccessibility is paired with the lover's claim of inviolability,<sup>385</sup> indicating that the two are connected. And, even when the lover's body is seen, for example by Delia's spouse (*coniunx*), it is not truly comprehensible. He reveals that a magic spell has been cast (at 1.2.41f), in order to prevent the spouse from believing what his own eyes show him (Tibullus 1.2.55-56):

*ille nihil poterit de nobis credere cuiquam,  
non sibi, si in molli viderit ipse toro.*

He will not be able to believe anyone about us,  
not even himself, if he himself saw us on the soft bed.

The lover's body is not absent or even unavailable—he is not disembodied—but it is not to be known, unlike the soldier, whose character and identity are established and recognized through an imagined scene of visual exposure. In its construction of the lover's identity, elegy negates his susceptibility to such criticism by simply declaring the lover immune to such evaluations, while it highlights the degree to which his poetic and narrative rival is subject to them. The poet-lover creates this binary of visual accessibility and inaccessibility to separate his own identity and character from that of his rival: he is present and available, although not physically defined for the reader, while

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<sup>385</sup> See Chapter 4 pages 140-142 for discussion of the earlier section of this poem.

the rival, physically defined, is not able to serve as an appropriate lover for the *puella*. The degree of visual access becomes a sign for each figure's fundamental identity: it is in the nature of the soldier to be on display, while invisibility and inviolability mark a lover.

### Beauty, Erotic Potential, and Effeminacy: A Woman Reading the Soldier's Body

While display of the body opens up the *potential* for negative criticism that can then be tied to one's identity, it is not the display itself but the perspective of the viewer that condemns the figure. Questions of beauty and vision intersect in the female body and result in an identity defined by the poet-lover's sexual desire and her status as object.<sup>386</sup> When beauty and display intersect in the figure of the male body, however, it is not necessary that the same reading result. For example, when Homer mentions the beauty of a Greek warrior, there is a fundamental link between beauty and the epic hero's identity as a mythological warrior that resists a reading of him as a sexual object.<sup>387</sup> Although Achilles' "beauty goes beyond that which seems to be the standard concomitant of nobility,"<sup>388</sup> the connection between beauty and the archetype of the epic warrior holds positive value for the hero's masculine identity. The figure of Achilles does not risk being labeled as effeminate within the epic paradigm of masculinity simply because he has a physical beauty that can be appreciated by either an internal or external audience. Reed states that "a youth (dead or, indeed, alive) is *kalos*, "beautiful," in early epic not by virtue of the sensual properties that arouse

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<sup>386</sup> See Chapter 1 pages 4-6 on the *puella* as the object of the erotic gaze.

<sup>387</sup> Richlin (1983) 45 contrasts treatment of beauty of elegiac characters to those of epic, stating that "beauty in characters in epic is generally part of their heroic, quasi-divine status, especially when a god or goddess throws beauty over a hero or heroine like a cloak."

<sup>388</sup> King (1987) 3 examines his role as the "best of the Achaeans" and what characteristics that entails.

desire in those who look at him, but because of those physical properties that mark an able warrior in his prime.”<sup>389</sup> The warrior’s body is beautiful, but not inevitably sensual.<sup>390</sup> In this case, beauty indicates the warrior’s strength. In a statement reminiscent of the previous chapter’s discussion of the traditional soldier’s scar, Vernant argues that “the youth and beauty of the fallen hero’s body reflect the shining glory for which he sacrificed his life.”<sup>391</sup> The dead hero’s beauty in epic, while problematic on the surface, instead reinforces the hero’s status as hyper-masculine.

According to the paradigms established by epic tradition, a warrior’s beauty is not effeminizing. Yet, in his fourth book of elegies, Propertius directs the erotic gaze of female characters toward the soldier. In a change from previous treatment of the soldier in his other three books of elegy, where the Propertian narrator either established himself as an equal through *militia amoris* or criticized the soldier for his greed, the poet’s merging of elegiac concerns with those of aetiology creates a different dynamic for engaging with the soldier. Although this new programmatic element alters the poet’s focus, Welch states that Propertius “continues to engage the themes of selfhood and discourse that dominate his earlier work, while introducing new levels of complexity.”<sup>392</sup> With

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<sup>389</sup> Reed (2007) 32.

<sup>390</sup> King (1987) 3-4 notes the difference between the use of *kalos* for Achilles vs. Paris, Ganymede, and Bellerophon. For the latter three figures, *kalos* “express[es] a stunning and sexually enticing beauty rather than the comeliness that is the normal visual expression of nobility.” Being beautiful does raise questions about masculine status when it functions beyond one’s role as warrior.

Salazar (2000) 134-135 states that “...when male beauty is not directly connected with death, reference to it is always used as an insult, to emphasise a man’s lack of courage or fighting prowess—e.g. the ‘most good-looking one’ used by Hector against Paris at III.39....Beauty without the heroic touch is appreciated in women and is therefore a negative attribute in a man, something that makes him less of a man.”

<sup>391</sup> Vernant (1991) 67 [quoted also in Reed (2007) 32]. Salazar (2000) 134 states that “beauty is another attribute used to heighten the tragedy of the warrior’s actual or impending death.”

<sup>392</sup> Welch (2005) 11.

the introduction of public contexts and female perspectives, the elegist is able to offer new insight into the same questions of identity that he has posed all along. Female viewers allow the elegist to provide erotic readings of adult male bodies that he cannot offer through his male *persona*.<sup>393</sup> I argue that the new reading offered for the soldier's body and the signs that normally grant him authority do not result from an arbitrary or undirected mixture of the erotic with the patriotic.<sup>394</sup> Through this angle, new concerns emerge to reveal a different facet of the poet-lover's relationship to the soldier.

In one of Propertius' Roman-themed poems contrasting the effects of war abroad and at home, Arethusa laments the absence of her husband Lycotas. In a letter to her husband, Arethusa provides a private reading<sup>395</sup> of her husband's body imagined in the context of the battlefield (Propertius 4.3.23-30):

*dic mihi, num teneros urit lorica lacertos?  
 num gravis imbelles atterit hasta manus?  
 haec noceant potius quam dentibus ulla puella  
 det mihi plorandas per tua colla notas.  
 diceris et macie vultum tenuasse; sed opto  
 e desiderio sit color iste meo.  
 at mihi cum noctes induxit vesper amaras,  
 si qua relictæ iacent, osculor arma tua.*

<sup>393</sup> Janan (2001) 55 argues that Propertius' "experiments in female subjectivity" offer new perspectives of "the body as the icon of another truth."

<sup>394</sup> While the poems of Propertius Book 4 (for our purposes, specifically Propertius 4.3 and 4.4) have been examined with an interest in demonstrating the combination of the polar poetics reflected by *amor* (elegy) and *Roma* (patriotic/epic), a circumstance that would result in the eroticization of these soldiers, I argue that this effeminization is not merely a reflection of a shift in Propertius' poetics. The soldier has been a recurring figure throughout elegy as the figure against whom the poet's persona defines himself. Presenting the soldier (or epic hero) in these effeminizing situations agrees with the elegist's other attempts to slight the soldier.

For discussion of Propertius' bipolar poetics in Book 4 as played out upon the bodies of Hercules and Vertumnus, see DeBrohun (1994). She argues that the combination of elegiac and patriotic values works well in the figure of Vertumnus and demonstrates the potential for success in the new book. She then points out that the cross-dressing of Hercules demonstrates the incongruity of mixing the values of *amor* and *Roma*, but this "indecorous nature" is not a problem for a genre that already transgresses the boundaries of normative values (62).

<sup>395</sup> See Janan (2001) 53-69 for a Lacanian approach to this poem. This approach opens up the female's role in disrupting male identity. I focus instead on elegy's complication of identity in general. For my reading, the female viewer is a means to an end, not the end itself.

Tell me, if your breastplate burns your tender shoulders?  
 Or if your heavy spear wears down your unwarlike hands?  
 It is better that these cause harm, than that any girl with her teeth  
 gives marks along your neck to be wept by me.  
 You are said to have grown thin with emaciation in your face; but I hope  
 your coloring may be caused by longing for me.  
 But when evening draws bitter nights over me,  
 I kiss your arms, if there are any remaining that lie about.

In this passage, Arethusa interrupts a general lamentation of Lycotas' absence as she turns her focus to the condition of his body.<sup>396</sup> From the outset of this description, there is a confusion of amatory and military implications for the condition of his body. His body appears particularly susceptible to physical wounding (*urit* and *atterit*), not from the enemy, but from merely wearing the equipment a soldier's body should find natural. This potential for real war injury is contrasted with potential amatory wounds from a rival, with the former being preferred by his wife. Further, in her concern, Arethusa characterizes her husband as having tender shoulders (*teneros lacertos*) and unwarlike hands (*imbellis manus*), attributes that are at minimum inappropriate for a soldier and perhaps better suited to either the *puella* or the poet-lover himself.<sup>397</sup> The pairing of this characterization of his body with his weaponry confuses the identity of what should be a solidly masculine figure, particularly when his unwarlike hands are paired with the heavy spear (*gravis hasta*). This heaviness, a characteristic reserved for elegy's description of epic meter, juxtaposed with his injury marks him as the effeminate term in this pairing. Further, in an inversion of her previous hope that war is the element taking its toll on the body and not

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<sup>396</sup> The circumstance of the wife left at home while the husband is off in search of wealth has a parallel in Propertius 3.12, but in this instance it is now played out on the soldier's body.

<sup>397</sup> Wyke (1987a) 160 notes the connection of the attributes of a *puella* to the soldier. They can be extended to the poet-lover himself as well, which offers further complications. DeBrohun (2003) 187 also notes that these adjectives recall the poet-lover as *miles amoris*.

love, Arethusa hopes that his physical deterioration (*macie vultum tenuasse*) is a sign of lovesickness, rather than the hardships associated with military campaign. Once again the same terminology (*macie* and *tenuasse*) set aside for the elegiac lover's lovesickness is used to describe the soldier's physical condition.<sup>398</sup> "Warfare is increasingly associated with the erotic and subordinated to erotic concerns..." as the glory of battle is pushed to the background and her loneliness eroticizes his body.<sup>399</sup> Finally, Arethusa's longing is so extreme that not only is Lycotas' body subject to an erotic reading, but his armor, while serving as the term through which his effeminacy is emphasized earlier, also becomes wholly erotic as his weapons serve as a substitute for the beloved's body. In place of her husband, Arethusa kisses whatever weapons he has left behind (*osculator arma tua*).

As DeBrohun notes, Lycotas may be "in reality a *miles amoris* out of place" or "an *amator militiae* Arethusa herself has mentally cross-dressed."<sup>400</sup> In her interest for her husband's health, Arethusa employs terminology more appropriate to the poet-lover's body.<sup>401</sup> Just as is the case for the poet-lover who does not participate in the activity of the public sphere, the vocabulary associated with slenderness (*tenerus*) and lovesickness marks Lycotas' body as unsuitable

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<sup>398</sup> In his study tracing intertextual relationships in poetic speech, Trankle (1960) 53 notes the parallel of this terminology in Propertius 4.3.27 with that in Virgil's *Georgics* 3.129 (*ipsa autem macie tenuant armenta volentes*). He states that the use of *tenuare* can be read as a reference to poetic composition; this observation may lend some support to a metapoetic reading of the terminology of lovesickness as connected to the lover's body. Trankle concedes, however, that it is not unusual to transfer similar phrasing to completely different contexts.

<sup>399</sup> Wyke (1987a) 160.

<sup>400</sup> DeBrohun (2003) 192.

<sup>401</sup> Janan (2001) 58-64 offers an interesting interpretation of Lycotas' effeminization as resulting from his location at the empire's edges. I attribute the erotic content of Arethusa's reading to her perspective as a woman rather than his context; it seems to be the activities of war itself, not the context, that weaken Lycotas. With either reading, the concern is with uncovering what it means to be a Roman man.



for the activity in which he is engaging.<sup>402</sup> Yet, when applied to the soldier's body here, the incongruity between Arethusa's reading of his body and his role as soldier uncovers a greater instability in Lycotas' masculine identity than it does for the poet-lover.<sup>403</sup> Lycotas is not an elegiac lover, so this weakness can only be detrimental to his role as soldier. The soldier cannot assimilate these markers as a sign of his own identity to complicate their meaning beyond simple signs of effeminacy, as the poet-lover has. This physical weakness imparts to the poet-lover an effeminacy that he both embraces as elegiac lover and attempts to mitigate as a Roman man.<sup>404</sup> These evaluations submitted in the text of a letter are imprinted on Lycotas' distant body, and he is allowed no opportunity for rebuttal of this reading. Both poet-lover and the weakened soldier are similar here, but the mixing of the private reading by a female viewer in a public setting marks further difference between lover and soldier.

Another more direct reading of the soldier in the public context that has the potential to introduce eroticism into the soldier's characterization is the *teichoscopia*. This particular configuration of looking entails the soldier at battle on the field and the women of the city on the wall viewing the action. In Homer's *Iliad* 3, this type of scene does not elicit an eroticization of the Achaean heroes. Admiration is expressed for physical attributes, but these comments are

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<sup>402</sup> Richardson (1977) 431 remarks on the irony in this scene: "while she complains of the length of his service, she thinks of him as ill-suited to his duties."

<sup>403</sup> Salzman-Mitchell (2005) 123-124 points out the gendered juxtaposition of the woman weaving and the man at war, stating that in this case "the relationship between war and weaving becomes complementary, as [Arethusa] weaves cloaks to be used in war and thus indirectly contributes to it." While there exists this gender division, it does not reflect a simple dichotomy of female-male activities. Arethusa's weaving might be regarded as "a virtue of the ideal female" (120), but the erotic reading of her husband complicates Lycotas' status as the ideal male in this binary.

<sup>404</sup> For this discussion, see Chapter 3.

voiced through the perspective of Priam and Antenor, not Helen.<sup>405</sup> Likewise, in elegy, the soldier will not be eroticized through the reading of the lover. Acting within the prescribed guidelines of appropriate sexual practice as defined by Roman normative values, the lover's choice of beloved is limited to the *puella* and the young male (*iuvenis*). Both Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Roman elegy do offer these alternative female perspectives that exposes the soldier's body to private readings. Salzman-Mitchell argues for a greater complexity of the significance behind *teichoscopia*, when it is focalized through the female character:

"Teichoscopia in general is a curious situation in which women are allowed to look and men who fight become a spectacle for their eyes. It is also a rich place for gender issues because it allows the reader to see the scene through the woman's eyes...the main point of the warrior's existence is not to be looked at, as it is the case with women commonly, but to accomplish glorious deeds that place them beyond the personal in transcendent aspirations, to achieve *kleos* through action."<sup>406</sup>

Being seen may not be "the main point of the warrior's existence," but the hero's body does emerge as a dominant image in epic. And, in Ovidian epic, the hero's body evaluated by the female becomes an object, as those elements that ensure his masculinity, "achiev[ing] *kleos* through action," are overlooked in favor of an erotic reading.

In Propertius' *action* describing how the Capitoline came to be known as the Mons Tarpeius, we see this complication in viewing the soldier in Tarpeia's own private *teichoscopia*. Instead of admiring the heroic qualities of the soldier in action, the Vestal Virgin Tarpeia spies on the Sabine king's, Tatius', body through the private perspective of love and lust (Propertius 4.4.19-26):

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<sup>405</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 3.161-242.

<sup>406</sup> Salzman-Mitchell (2005) 109 discusses the role of *teichoscopia* in the context of Scylla's viewing of Minos in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and compares the viewing of Scylla with that of Tarpeia seen in Propertius. Scylla's resulting exile is seen as a sign that women holding an erotic gaze do not have the same power over their objects as women, as these women generally meet bad ends (12-13).

*vidit harenosis Tatium proludere campis  
 pictaque per flavas arma levare iubas;  
 obstipuit regis facie et regalibus armis;  
 interque oblitas excidit urna manus.  
 saepe illa immeritae causata est omina lunae  
 et sibi tingendas dixit in amne comas;  
 saepe tulit blandis argentea lilia nymphis,  
 Romula ne faciem laederet hasta Tati;*

She saw Tatius rally forth on the sandy fields  
 and lift his painted arms above his tawny crest:<sup>407</sup>  
 she was struck dumb by the good looks of the king and his royal arms;  
 and the urn fell through her forgetful hands.  
 Often she blamed an omen of the undeserving moon  
 and said that her locks must be washed in the river:  
 often she carried silver lilies to the flattering Nymphs,  
 so that a Roman spear would not wound Tatius's face.

In this reversal of focalization, the same body of terms reserved for the lover's reading of his beloved is attributed to Tarpeia's viewpoint. As she sees (*vidit*) Tatius walk across the field, Tarpeia is struck (*obstipuit*) in the same way that Propertius is when he sees the *puella*.<sup>408</sup> These two terms elicit the expectation of an erotic physical description of the object's body. Tarpeia's reading of Tatius' body is arrested and prolonged. In this section, we are presented with the specific physical attributes that excite Tarpeia: Tatius' *facies* (*facie...faciem*) and, as was the case with Arethusa above, his armor (*arma*).<sup>409</sup> The term *facies* is almost always used in the context of either the beauty of the *puella* or the *iuvenis*.<sup>410</sup> Only

<sup>407</sup> Richardson (1977) 436 on *per* implied through *super*.

<sup>408</sup> Cf. Propertius 1.3.28 and 2.29b.25f; Ovid, *Amores* 1.9.38.

<sup>409</sup> Janan (2001) 80 expands Tarpeia's desire to include Tatius' horse and his soldiers, in what is presented as a Female (in the Lacanian sense) confusion of boundaries. The definition of Tatius' appearance through "what is *not* Tatius" fits in well with the Female denial of boundaries and logic that Janan outlines earlier in the chapter (70-71). Tarpeia's application of erotic terminology is limited to Tatius' face and armor, so I would not extend her desire to include other elements.

<sup>410</sup> From the texts I am consulting for this project, I found only two exceptions to this term being applied to either the *puella*, the *iuvenis*, or a potential passive male (Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.33): Tibullus 1.9.69 (although Tibullus denies that the husband has beauty to motivate his wife to adorn herself); Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.503.

once, and in questionable circumstances, is the term applied to potential lovers.<sup>411</sup>

The adult male's physical beauty does not feature as a key aspect of the male's identity, at least for the lover and ideally for a respectable adult male. Further, Tarpeia's desire that Tatius not receive wounds from a spear, while perhaps expected in an amatory context, negates any redemption of his body from this objectification. In this context, the soldier's body is on display, not because of his valor in battle potentially reflected in his wounds, but because of his beauty. The eyes of the female viewer reveal the erotic potential of the male body that the lover hides when referring to himself. In fact, his body is never read through the erotic perspective of another. The reader here is presented with a soldier in his appropriate setting and in fitting attire, yet the resulting reading is eroticized, thus objectifying this otherwise traditional picture of a (proto-Roman) soldier in arms.

The eroticization of Tatius is made even more explicit a few lines later (Propertius 4.4.31-34):

*'ignes castrorum, et Tatiae praetoria turmae,  
et formosa oculis arma Sabina meis,  
o utinam ad vestros sedeam captiva Penates,  
dum captiva mei conspicer ora Tati!*

'Fires of the camp, and tents of Tatius' troop  
and Sabine arms so beautiful to my eyes,  
would that I sit captive at your gods,  
as long as captive I would see the face of my Tatius!

In this passage, the face and armor are, once again, mentioned as the attributes that attract Tarpeia. In this instance, it is not the face that is explicitly eroticized, but the armor, as "the vestal virgin...bring[s] an erotic interest to military

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<sup>411</sup> In Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.503 Apollo states that each man should follow his strength in pursuing women—although even here those men who rely on their *facies* are put on display for their beauty, so it objectifies them in the end.

matters.”<sup>412</sup> While Wyke sees this erotic coloring of Tatius’ armor as a poetic attempt to meld the polarities of *arma* and *amor*, the significance extends beyond poetic program.<sup>413</sup> In this mixing of public context and private viewing, the arms appear to stand in for the body of Tatius to some degree, as they did for Lycotas above. In this reading, erotic concerns override those appropriate to the public sphere. This substitution is focalized explicitly through Tarpeia’s eyes (*formosa oculis...meis*), and it is her perspective that marks this extension of the soldier’s body as effeminate with the use of an adjective suited for the beloved’s body.<sup>414</sup> The change in perspective from the male poet-lover to the female opens up not only the male body to erotic viewing, but also the symbol of his valor (his armor).

In this instance with Tarpeia and in Arethusa’s embrace of her husband’s arms, the tools of war (and epic) move wholly into the erotic context of elegy. No longer are arms the means by which one receives honor, despite Vertumnus’ declaration to the contrary (Propertius 4.2.27):

*arma tuli quondam et, memini, laudabar in illis:*

I once bore arms, and, I remember, was praised in them:

These weapons are sources of praise, but, perceived through the eyes of the female, they are cause for erotic praise. Armor, normally lending a degree of impenetrability and honor, undermines the masculine identity of both Lycotas and Tatius through both the erotic characterization and treatment of these weapons. This change in perspective also disrupts the normally stable

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<sup>412</sup> Wyke (1987a) 164.

<sup>413</sup> Wyke (1987a) 165.

<sup>414</sup> See fn. 120 on the few applications of *formosus* outside of the beloved’s body.

significance of the battlefield or camp (*castra*).<sup>415</sup> What is normally a context for martial valor, becomes, instead, a scene of marital desire. The soldier's potential for gaining glory and honor in battle is replaced with the affection of a wife (or potential wife in Tatius' case). Erotic concerns replace those of traditional masculinity in this context that expects displays of valor.<sup>416</sup> Through these two poems, we can see the potential dangers of visual accessibility. Both soldiers act in accordance with the expectations of their respective public spaces, but susceptibility to an outside reading complicates their identities.<sup>417</sup>

Without the element of display associated with soldiers and the battlefield, these two figures would not be as accessible as they are. And yet, it is not the physical display itself that is problematic for masculine identity, but the eroticization of it. In some ways, these scenes form a key demarcation between the definition of the bodies of the soldier and lover: the soldier may become an erotic object, but the elegiac lover paradoxically cannot.<sup>418</sup> This difference marks these two figures as not physically interchangeable. Although Arethusa employs the same terminology marked for the poet-lover to Lycotas, the two figures are not equivalent. The poet-lover usually applies these terms to himself, whereas Lycotas has no influence over the formulation of his physical identity. Arethusa

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<sup>415</sup> In his discussion tracing the significance behind Propertius' use of the terms *castra*, *arma*, and *militia*, Baker (1968) 342-343 juxtaposes Propertius 4.3 and 4.4, where *castra* and *arma* stand in the way of love in one but incite passion in the other.

<sup>416</sup> For discussion of Tarpeia's interaction with the public spaces of the Capitol and the Forum throughout the poem, see Welch (2005) 67-76. Welch's focus is mostly on these spaces as restrictions for Tarpeia's behavior, whereas my focus is on how she reads the body in that space, redefining both the body and the context until the end.

<sup>417</sup> Welch (2005) states that Propertius' readings of Rome's public monuments demonstrates the potential for readings outside of those intended by Augustus. Through these alternate readings, Propertius indicates that "Roman identity...is always under negotiation" (9).

<sup>418</sup> Beautiful lovers are mentioned by both the *puella* and the *lena* in *Amores* 1.8.31-34 and 67-68, but the poet-lover is never identified specifically with that particular lover. The implications behind the beauty of these lovers demonstrate why the elegiac lover would want to separate himself from association with physical beauty: it effeminizes the particular lover to the point of taking the passive role in sex with an adult male lover. See discussion in Chapter 2.

imposes this reading on her husband's body, and he has no opportunity for refining his identity. In the case of Tatius, the circumstances are more complicated. Tarpeia renders his body and armor in terminology even more effeminate than that reserved for the lover, when she describes him in terms of physical beauty, an aesthetic appropriate for the elegiac beloveds. Tatius, however, does have a chance for rebuttal of this reading. In the end, he orders that Tarpeia be killed with armor similar to that she had previously read in erotic terms (*ingestis comitum...armis*, 4.4.91). Through this final action of the poem, Tatius extinguishes the reading that problematized both his identity and the battlefield.<sup>419</sup>

### The Lover Exposed

Similar threats from outside readings of the lover's body are mostly eliminated in elegy through the careful restriction of outside access to the poet-lover and his peers. The risks of visual exposure and justification for the lover's limitation of his visual accessibility can be seen in the singular instance in which he himself is read by someone outside of his peer group. In *Amores* 3.11, the lover takes up the customary position of the elegiac lover, that is a vigil outside the *puella's* door (*excubui clausam...ante domum*, 3.11.12), and considers repudiating his *puella*. This turmoil is not unusual for the elegiac lover. In the lover's subsequent argumentation for why he should leave the *puella*, Caroline

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<sup>419</sup> Welch (2005) 74 states that through this action Tatius supports the Roman values that had confined Tarpeia. Janan (2001) 75 sees this ending as a confusion of the issue, because Tatius' action becomes confusion between the terms "masculine honor" and "feminine wiles" through his deception of Tarpeia. My reading lies between both, as I see it as both confirmation of Tatius' masculinity and indication of the potential instability in all of elegy's characters.

Perkins has read yet another instance of the lover's inability to persuade.<sup>420</sup> In this case, however, it is not the *puella*, but the lover himself who fails to be convinced, as he returns to the *puella*. In my study of the poem, I turn instead to the specific catalyst that pushes the lover to reconsider not only his relationship with the *puella*, but his identity as elegiac lover. In this poem, the Ovidian lover is exposed to the gaze of a rival leaving his *puella*. It is specifically this experience that causes him to reconsider his elegiac values, at least for a moment (Ovid, *Amores* 3.11.1-16):

*multa diuque tuli; vitiis patientia victa est:  
cede fatigato pectore, turpis amor.  
scilicet asservi iam me fugique catenas,  
et, quae non puduit ferre, tulisse pudet.  
vicimus et domitum pedibus calcamus Amorem:  
venerunt capiti cornua sera meo.  
perfer et obdura: dolor hic tibi proderit olim:  
saepe tulit lassus sucus amarus opem.  
ergo ego sustinui, foribus tam saepe repulsus,  
ingenuum dura ponere corpus humo?  
ergo ego nesciocui, quem tu complexa tenebas,  
excubui clausam servus ut ante domum?  
vidi, cum foribus lassus prodiret amator  
invalidum referens emeritumque latus;  
hoc tamen est levius quam quod sum visus ab illo:  
eveniat nostris hostibus ille pudor.*

I bore many things and for a long time; by faults patience has been  
conquered, withdraw from a wearied heart, wicked love.  
Obviously I have rescued myself and have fled the chains,  
and I am ashamed to have borne what did not cause shame to bear.  
I have conquered and trample upon Love subdued by my feet:  
the horns came late to my head.  
Endure and be firm: this grief will be beneficial for you at some point:  
often a bitter potion brought benefit to the wearied.  
Why then, so often repelled from your doors, did I endure  
to set my honorable body on the hard ground?  
Why then did I keep watch for whoever you were holding in embrace,  
like a slave before your closed door?  
I saw, when your lover set forth tired from your doors,  
carrying back a weak and exhausted side;

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<sup>420</sup> Perkins (2002).



nevertheless this was a lighter matter than the fact that I was seen by him:  
let that shame befall my enemies.

This poem reflects a change of heart that happens only after being seen by a rival. We see the elegiac lover read himself and the shame caused by his status as elegiac lover through another's eyes. This experience and the perspective of the rival cause him to reconsider the value of his entire identity. He indicates that prior to this interaction with his rival, he bore his life as lover without shame. As he sits outside serving as a slave (*servus*) to his *puella*, there is no indication that this condition is anything beyond the norm for him, since he feels none of the shame that he feels after being seen. His view of his own position shifts with the exit of his rival, not because he was successful where the elegiac lover failed, but specifically because he was seen (*quod sum visus ab illo*) in this position that he thought neutral only a few lines before. The elegiac lover's status as *servus* loses this neutrality in proximity to another who does not share that status. While the lover himself looks at (*vidi*) the rival, it is the potential reading from this amatory superior (at least temporarily) that problematizes his status and causes the lover himself to reevaluate his previous behavior as shameful (*quae non pudeat ferre, tulisse pudet*).

This passage highlights the reason why the lover discusses his passivity and his physical infirmity primarily in the context of either the *puella* or a colleague in love: such outside readings endanger the fundamental identity of the elegiac lover. In close proximity to a rival, the poet-lover's potential weaknesses have not been emphasized within the narrative. The poet-lover's intention is not to relegate himself completely to effeminacy, but to lay claim to some of this weakness in controlled contexts that are appropriate to his love

affair. Effeminacy amidst his fellow lovers or the *puella* is unremarkable, but the reading of an elegiac body from outside the elegiac peer group marks that body.

### Conclusion

The preceding passages demonstrate the conscious control of visibility in elegy and the risks inherent in exposure to a viewer's reading, especially that of a female or a rival. The incongruity of the perspectives allowed within two disparate contexts, that tied to the lover's amatory peer (the bedroom) and that to the soldier (the battlefield), underlines the connection of visual access and its subsequent risk to these figures' relationships with the poet-lover. The relative visual access granted to Gallus compared to that permitted the soldier replicates the lover's anxiety about his own visual exposure. The lover identifies closely with his amatory peer, and, therefore, Gallus' physical body undergoes little exposure and minimal eroticism. Despite the highly provocative setting of the bedroom and sexual activity implied, Gallus' exposure does not result in a loss of masculinity, but instead a confirmation of potency. Contrarily, the rivalry between the poet-lover and the soldier results in negative readings for his body. The soldier acting appropriately on the battlefield is subject to either the poet-lover's ethical criticism and objectification or the female's erotic gaze and subsequent effeminization. In this way, elegy is able to create another imbalance in the identity of the soldier that builds upon the positive valuation of a lover not defined by his beauty or a body read by others. In the *persona* of the poet-lover, the author outlines the amatory narrative and ensures his corporeal and masculine integrity, while problematizing that of his rivals.

This system, however, becomes more complicated with the notion of interchangeability between the lover and his peers and rivals. On the one hand, the potential substitution of the lover's body for Gallus' presents little problem for the lover, because this exchange would merely confirm his potency as it did for Gallus. On the other hand, the reflection of the symptoms of lovesickness and elegiac tenderness (*tenerus*) onto the soldier, Lycotas, confuses the lover's own connection with these two physical aesthetics and his conventional opposition to the soldier. Further, the application of the effeminizing terms of beauty to the Sabine soldier-king, Tatius, momentarily harms the soldier's status. While Tatius ultimately eliminates the source of this liminalization, the reader is left with the question of where he stands now. His termination of an eroticizing reader points to the instability of all identity in elegy, as his masculinity shifts from one extreme to the other in the matter of a few lines of poetry.

## Chapter VI:

### Conclusion

It has been the central goal of this study to demonstrate that the gender system of Roman elegy was more complex than a simple dichotomy of effeminacy and masculinity can express. The poet-lover operates at and between two extremes of a spectrum, as he continually reformulates his elegiac and masculine identity to suit the needs of the narrative context. In fact, no male character, including the male beloved, operates solely at either extreme of the gender range. In place of a weak lover entirely complacent with his effeminacy, this study has revealed repeated attempts to reassign the meaning of traditional terms signaling weakness and strength. This reallocation of masculine power confirms the complexity of elegy's engagement with normative Roman values as it refigures and reconstitutes traditional signs for use in the elegiac sphere. This influence is not restricted to interactions with the *puella* in her role either as dramatic character or as a metaphor for the poetic text, but is pertinent to homosocial interaction as well. It is not only the narrator's authority as lover and poet that is established, but also his potential as a Roman man.

In a change from previous studies that have focused on the female body or the lover's relationship to the *puella* in their search for the lover's identity, my study uncovers male identity by examining male elegiac bodies alongside traditional Roman masculinity. However constructed the elegiac world may be, it is not a world separated from the normative concerns of the real world, but it

often reassigns the meaning of both literary conventions and traditionally charged signs to reposition the lover. Scholars have already recognized that the lover's body rendered in the terms of lovesickness and infirmity holds significance beyond mere application of literary convention. The aesthetics of both paradigms, as they appear on the lover's body, have been read as a metaphor for poetic style and composition. But if these poetic conventions indicate something unique about elegiac poetics, why can they not hold unique significance for the physical body and elegiac gender?

This study has shown that the body wrapped in the terms of poetic convention does not function merely as the stale reiteration of literary tradition. Elegy's appropriation of these terms lends new weight to their role within the amatory narrative. While working within the confines of literary conventions, elegy undermines the ostensible stability of the meaning behind these conventional paradigms as it negotiates and renegotiates the lover's position within normative Roman values. Chapters Two and Three demonstrated the lover's consistent opposition to the two beloveds, despite indications of potential comparability in gender status through his repeated claims of effeminacy. The restriction of an already conventional vocabulary of erotic beauty to the beloveds and the conscious formulation of an aesthetic of infirmity for the lover paradoxically reclassifies his effeminate body, since the authorized appearance of the lovesick or impotent body stands in direct opposition to that of the beautiful beloved. The lover does not gain power from his body, but the body he has is not able to serve as erotic object. These very terms of illness that shield him from association with the beloveds once again problematize his status when

considered in a broader system of normative values. Even in this limited context, the lover's status is a term under constant renegotiation.

Similarly, in Chapters Four and Five, the stability of the soldier and his identifying markers (the scar and his *arma*) is refuted as the poet-lover reassigns meaning to these traditional signifiers. While the conventional rhetoric of elegy undermines the lover's position relative to the soldier through the respectability of their occupations, the opposition of these two figures is equally destabilized through the body. Through *militia amoris*, these two polar identities are brought into closer proximity, both in terms of respectability and physicality. As the lover positions himself as the soldier's peer, he lays claim, through his metaphorical amatory wounds, to a degree of the physical risk and the resulting valor that a soldier might encounter in battle. Their equality is ultimately renegotiated, as the respectability normally attributed to war wounds vanishes through the poet-lover's connection of greed to the wounded body. The lover adopts the wound of the idealized soldier of epic or history, but with Ovid's and Tibullus' particular readings of the soldier's scar, the soldier in elegy is left with a scar denoting shame. The oppositional relationship of soldier and lover results in a rhetorical reshaping of the soldier's body when it is not used to elevate the lover's status. The difference in the nature of wounds, between the literal and metaphorical, allows the lover to redefine the nature of the soldier's wound, while maintaining his own respectability and physical inviolability.

Further, in Chapter Five, the *arma* conventionally associated with the warrior are transformed when carried by the soldiers of Propertius' last book. The erotic readings of Arethusa and Tarpeia extended to the soldier's weaponry refashion the significance of this sign for the soldier's identity. These extensions

of the soldier's physical body no longer function as a markers of the ideal soldier and his valor, but, instead, they help push the soldier's overall identity toward effeminacy. The distortion of these signs within the context of the battlefield or the camp (*castra*) also realigns the public space tied to the soldier's activity. It becomes a space for physical exposure, rather than display of honor and devotion to Rome.

What results from this elaborate system of associations is a highly variable discourse on the body. Manipulation of the body as a sign of male identity is not accomplished in isolation. Relationship to the body shifts along with the concomitant masculinity depending upon the dynamic of the particular relationship described in a specific poem. Elegy's treatment of gender complicates identity for all male elegiac characters, as the poet-lover defines the parameters of his own masculine identity against a contrasting set of terms applied to the bodies of elegy's other characters. While this poetic practice attempts to create the illusion within each poem that there exists a definite line between the lover and the other elegiac characters of his poems, the lover's status is not a single, stable factor that can be securely defined across whole books of elegy, and sometimes not even within individual poems. In his attempt to differentiate his identity, the poet-lover often points, instead, to the instability of signs and interchangeability of characters. As he breaks down the fundamental components of these characters and demonstrates how their identities are just as variable as his own, the lover introduces the notion that identity is so fluid that some of these figures are transposable.

The disruption of the traditional differentiation between men of the public sphere and men of the private sphere, often through the very values that mark

their difference, implies that the identity of each of these characters is negotiable both inside and outside of elegy. As the space in which this variability is explicitly revealed, elegy represents much more than a light genre of amatory lament. While adopting the position that it is a genre concerned with private love affairs, the elegist's interests often lie at the core of what it means to be Roman. Fluctuation in the semiotics of the elegiac world suggests instability in the semiotics of normative values. The elegiac world, therefore, is not so much an alternate literary world operating in parallel with the material world, but rather there are significant areas of commonality and points of intersection between them.



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